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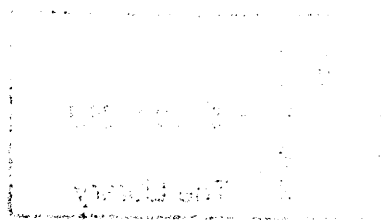
Christian and Muslim Activist Networks Involved in the Climate Movement

Doctor in Philosophy

Religious Studies

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the involvement of Christian and Muslim activists with the Climate and Transition Towns Movements, in Britain. It employs a predominantly ethnographic approach and uses a mixed methodology to investigate a varied data (qualitative and quantitative, as well as additional secondary media) gathered during 2007 – 2010.

As the Climate and Transition Movements represent the macro level of this research field, this study more broadly profiles these two movements and enquires into how environmental networks organise and expand. It also investigates how the faith networks function alongside or as part of other networks in this field, and how processes of cross-fertilisation take place between them. At a micro level, this thesis is concerned with activists' identity and with the functions of ecological ritual in the context of my study. This thesis proposes that ecological rituals serve a role in the maintenance of a faith identity in faith networks as well as in creating a new planetary identity in participants. Finally my research shows that rituals and performances aim to engage activists and their audience (the media, society at large) affectively with Climate Change, whilst making these concerns personal to the individual.

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I began my doctoral research when my son, Owain, was only two years old. He joined me on protest marches, eco-retreats, even conferences, and he gave me the strength and inspiration to keep going. It is to Owain and my mother, Margareta Niță, that I would like to dedicate this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, Climate Change discourse, the tip of the environmental discourse, has finally become available and visible to the general public. A polite conversation about the weather with a stranger can no longer mean what it would have meant ten years ago, even if (on a cold day) they may say: 'So much for global warming, it isn't coming here, is it?' Although society seems (on most days) to get on with its business, the social implications of Global Warming or Climate Change will perhaps become discernible as society gets some distance on this historic process: the realisation that human activities have caused a new geological era for the earth, an era geoscientists now refer to as the Anthropocene (see Archean, 2011).

Climate Change specifically, and the environmental crisis more generally, are highly politicized issues. Yet a coherent, global Climate Change policy has yet to be produced. Climate Change challenges the world's governments, and particularly First World governments where carbon emissions are highest, to think and act globally, in a common interest. This is a challenge that excites many, because it has the potential to become a platform for unity in a divided world. However, political analysts and commentators warn that policy-makers attempt to tackle the environmental crisis superficially, without addressing core 'systemic difficulties' or 'structural resistances', and hence perpetuating problems or circumventing real solutions (Rustin, 2007).

We are faced with such systemic difficulties or 'system contradictions' whenever our values and norms are in a state of conflict (Lockwood, 1964). In his editorial introduction to *Environment and Society*, Philip Sarre points to the disparity between environmentalism and policy-making. On one hand, environmentalist attitudes rarely produce clear policy proposals. On the other, the policies of governments and corporations react to environmental views symptomatically and without any significant change 'to underlying attitudes and goals' (Sarre & Reddish, eds., 1996: 2). These underlying attitudes, goals and practices may in turn have been developed 'when society was dependent upon the local environment but had small impact upon it' (ibid.: 1). Thus the biblical dictum 'be fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 1:28) carries with it, according to Sarre, an

assumption that 'domination and exploitation would not destroy the environments people depended on' (ibid.).

The question arising from this last is: are these ethical values that shape human and non-human interaction derived from religious traditions and more importantly are they to blame for the environmental crisis? In a lecture given in 1966 entitled 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis' the historian Lynn White Jr. argued that the ecological crisis was a result of our inculcated Judeo-Christian beliefs and values, mainly the belief in a transcendent God whose most valued creation (and the only one created in God's own image), 'Man', was given dominion over the rest, and was thus separated from it (White, 1967). The Lynn White critique could be considered a *sine qua non*, albeit obsolete, of scholarly writing about Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and environmentalism. White was not the first to have made such a claim. Aldo Leopold had already suggested that 'conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land' (1989 [1949]: viii). Yet White made an extremely important claim that was going to be addressed by many eco-critics and eco-theologians who engaged with this issue:

Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny – that is, by religion [and since] the roots of our troubles are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not (White, 1967: 1207).

White's accusation produced a massive response as the debate he ignited involved historians, environmentalists, philosophers, religious scholars and many others, preoccupied with either identifying the implications of this new original sin or attempting to show that Christianity in fact had an environmental ethos in the application of stewardship or social justice. Paradoxically, in their attempt to exonerate Christianity, some theologians who argued with White became eco-theologians, and therefore much as White had proposed, tried to make Christianity part of the solution rather than the problem (ibid.).

Since 2005 a Climate Movement has been growing actively in Britain and abroad. The movement is predicated on both protest and also on changing values and lifestyles. Although the Climate Movement may be viewed genealogically or diachronically as the most recent

crystallisation of the Green Movement similar to, for example, the Anti Nuclear Protests of the 1980s or the Road Protests of the 1990s, it is also very much distinct from past waves of environmentalism, most notably through a global, unprecedented involvement from and engagement with a wide spectrum of political, social and religious factions.

My doctoral research set out to investigate the involvement of Abrahamic faith groups (i.e. Christianity, Islam and Judaism) in the Climate Movement. Although at the beginning of my research, back in 2007, I had not yet realised that the Climate Movement was a connected web of networks, I did suppose that the bringing together of activists from various religious, political and social backgrounds would provide a good arena for investigating areas of cross-fertilization and, potentially, of conflict. I proposed to take an ethnographic approach in my research and discover the boundaries of my research field.

I chose to look at Abrahamic faith groups in particular because I hypothesised that Christian and Muslim activists were the newer arrivals on the eco front. Specific research concerned with Abrahamic religionists (Christians, Muslims and Jews) involved with the Climate Movement, or with environmentalism more broadly, is extremely scarce. My own research aims to fill this particular gap in the academic debate on eco-theology and eco-spirituality by providing evidence of how these apologetic and doctrinal traditions operate at a grassroots level. The faith groups who participated in my research identify themselves as people of faith, or religious people. The Climate Movement on the other hand is a self-declared secular movement, and some of the networks that partake in this movement have an anarchic, anti-institutional ethos. This religious-secular division however is not a straightforward one. Some scholars argue countercultural environmental movements are in fact religious, despite their declared secularity and their opposition to institutionalised religion (Taylor, 2001, 2010a). Abrahamic traditions are often set in opposition with nature religions and nature religionists are reported to be critical of Abrahamic religions for their anthropocentrism, patriarchal tradition and arrogance (Taylor, 2010a: 5, 8, 36 & 163).

My thesis provides a wealth of evidence that challenges the view that Abrahamic religions are maladaptive and cannot produce an adequate response, given the urgency of the ecological crisis, a view endorsed by the environmental anthropologist Roy Rappaport (1999), and further

explored by Bron Taylor in his article 'Earth Religion and Radical Religious Reformation' (Taylor, 2010b). Examining the view that the major religious traditions may be obsolete and only capable of changing in incremental and thus insufficient ways, Taylor contends that

[L]ongstanding religions have more historical and conceptual obstacles to overcome than do post-Darwinian forms of nature spirituality, and this is why very little of the energy expended by participants in the world's religions is currently going toward the protection and restoration of the world's ecosystems. Conversely, participants in nature spiritualities steeped in an evolutionary-ecological worldview appear to be more likely to work ardently in environmental causes than those in religious traditions with longer pedigrees. [...]

(Taylor, 2010b: 6)

My data indicates that Christian and Muslim climate activists adapted their religious beliefs and practices to various, sometimes extreme, degrees in their encounter with the nature spirituality of the Climate Movement. My data attests to the high degree of adaptability Abrahamic faiths do have at their disposal. Despite the profound changes they underwent, most activists retained their primary faith identities in the Climate Movement and thus were motivated to act on Climate Change by their faith rather than any other political or secular concern. The hybrid results of these intersections need to be carefully examined if we are to understand the very mechanisms of this adaptation, and this is what my thesis sets out to accomplish.

Although my proposal was to examine the participation of religious activist networks in the Climate Movement, when most of my informants began to join the Transition Towns Movement in 2008-2009, I realised that the field had shifted and that I could not ignore Transition Towns simply because I had not set out to research it. Transitions Towns is a movement of intentional communities that strongly intersects the Climate Movement. As I will show in future chapters the Transition network is predicated on lifestyle rather than protest and has genealogical and physical links to many alternative networks and hubs in Britain. The Transition network proved very rapidly to become a network more able to aggregate different groups, communities and individuals due to its strategic organisation and ability to bridge alternative and mainstream factions. This contact between mainstream institutions, such as the Christian churches that opened their doors to

Christian eco-activists, and the more alternative activist networks that have gone through these doors to educate congregations on carbon economy (such as the Transition network), promises to further contribute to academic debates on mainstream vs. alternative culture and network theory.

Before I can proceed to formulate my research questions I would like to show how these were developed. For this purpose it is helpful to first present here a short ‘case study’ in my research that may be considered a pilot study because it represented my first experience of the field and the one that determined my research approach. As I will further elaborate in my methods and methodology chapter (Chapter 2), I understand a ‘case study’ to be an extended account of what went on during a given day in the field, similar to holding a magnifying glass over the field, and thus helping the researcher switch lenses between having a birds’ eye view of the field and focussing on a more detailed ideographic account.

Pilot Study and Development of Research Questions

I had initially identified one Christian organisation called ‘Operation Noah’ as the only Christian organisation in Britain exclusively concerned with Climate Change. Its campaign leader, Mark Dowd, had produced a television documentary called ‘God is Green’, which had been broadcast on Channel 4 in February 2007. The documentary invited both believers and atheists on a journey around the ‘major’ faiths and their leaders, attempting to show that, much like politicians, they were not prepared to take a crucial fundamental stand on Climate Change, despite the urgency of the crisis. I therefore looked up on the Internet the Operation Noah calendar of events and decided to take part in the next one, advertised in big bold letters on their front page: an invitation to ‘The Global Day of Action’. The reflections from this first pilot study describe my experience of the day and will help explain my approach to the field.

Reflections on my research journal: first day in the field

Saturday 8th December 2007. The programme read as follows:

10 am – 12 noon – Service of Prayer and Reflection (St Matthew's Church, Westminster)

12 noon – Assemble Millbank for main march

2:30 pm – Rally at US Embassy

5pm – 8 pm – After Party and Fund-raiser at the Synergy Centre

As I read the information again I realized that Operation Noah and other Christian organizations were coming together so that they could all join the main (secular) event: 'The National Climate March and Global Day of Action'. The Church service was organised by Christian Ecology Link, Operation Noah, Eco Congregation, and Student Christian Movement.

I arrived at St Matthews Church ahead of time and found about twenty people who were all busy putting placards and banners together, organising leaflets, etc. I introduced myself to the person who seemed to be in charge (I will call her Sue) and mentioned that I was a Religious Studies student and wished to participate in this event with a view to further research. It seemed natural to offer my help and this was well received. I was allocated some banners that needed to be mended and I joined a few other people involved in similar activities.

Soon we were all invited to join in an ad hoc choir, in preparation for the service. We sang 'Veni Sancte Spiritus' and 'Bless the Lord' at least half a dozen times until everyone knew where they came in and where to stop. As the songs started coming together it was obvious that our voices had become a choir. As the service started I suddenly felt uneasy about singing Christian songs and took my place at the back of the church.

The congregation in St Matthew's Church was not a 'traditional' community and could hardly qualify as a community of choice (see Brint, 2001). It could perhaps be understood more as a scape or milieu (Knott, 2002), and so worship and service could be a mode of coming together ahead of being dispersed in the main march.

After the priest spoke, it was the turn of the Campaign Director for Operation Noah to speak to the group. She started with the story of John the Baptist (a story that could bring the congregation together) and ended by demarcating the congregation from other Green militants who thought that fighting Climate Change could be done 'on their own' (and had hence been unsuccessful), whereas she believed that it had to be done inside the Christian community, following the example of Jesus and his apostles.

The mechanism of strengthening societal bonds by identifying the deviant (Foucault, 1961) is explored in psychological approaches to groups. Since this particular congregation was highly heterogeneous, projecting the group shadow (in this case impotence to combat Climate Change) onto others can be seen as an efficient way of achieving a certain degree of cohesion (McClure, 2005: 205).

The altar had been decorated with a toy polar bear, an apple, a blue globe and coal. All these objects, symbolic for Climate Change, had been placed on the altar by four members of the congregation, ceremoniously, in procession. It seems that in some ecological rituals the healing intention is often directed toward the Poles and their inhabitants (Boomer-Trent, 2007: 20-32). Apart from the obvious healing intention, we also encounter here a very practical feature of ecological ritual, or rather an immediate concern with the present time and with this world (and not another).

As we all left and joined the main march, I realized that the description of this event as 'a global day of action' was indeed accurate. The main march featured representations of melting polar bears, Santas, the sea level of 2012, a gargantuan Blair and a pantagruelian Bush, the Green party, drummers and music bands. The links between ritual and protest have already been addressed by some scholars who often point to the subversive and liberating 'carnavalesque' present in these settings (Bakhtin, 1941). 'Carnival laughter', albeit liberating, might indeed deflate a revolutionary spirit by providing an outlet for collective feelings of frustration and replace it with shrugging resignation (see Eagleton, 1981: 149). In this case, protesters colourfully and vocally performed their protest yet they ended by going back home or returning to work the next day.



Fig. 1 On the Way to Parliament Square, London 2007

When the march reached the main square where the speakers were preparing to make their address, the march divided organically. Two new groups were formed: (1) around the speakers' podium, the party members (as indicated by their placards) and the more obviously mainstream participants; (2) at the fringe, where the police had established a boundary, the drummers, people in masks, anarchists flying red and black flags. Around the podium people were listening to George Monbiot explaining that environmentalism and capitalism were mutually exclusive and that Climate Change could not be tackled only economically or politically, as '...it requires a profound ethical and philosophical change that can only take place in our heart, a revolution of the spirit'. Meanwhile the other (more alternative) group was attempting to advance towards the US embassy, whilst drumming in a very dramatic way; some had gongs and it was truly a powerful call.

As I had joined the drummers from the beginning of the march, I stayed with them and marched all the way to Parliament Square. The other Christian members I had met were themselves scattered through the big march – some carrying banners, some not. The drums became the focal point of the march. I thought of this as an entraining ritual and the drums were clearly extremely effective – we were all dancing and shouting together. I did not have to justify my participation this

time around, I was perfectly happy dancing and shouting. For the whole time we marched nobody spoke to each other, but we were all involved, dancing and chanting.

When we were shouting next to the police, somebody pushed the line and the police chased us for just a few yards. We all made space for the few women with younger children and then just pushed back against the police. In my journal, on the way back to Bath, I wrote: '*we started drumming in crescendo, all shouting...*' although not once had I touched a drum. At times I felt I was an outsider to the whole event, firstly because I was there to observe and secondly because I felt that (as a Romanian) I did not have a right to demand anything in London, as London and the British Houses of Parliament did not owe me anything. This made me think that perhaps 'levels of insiderness and outsidersness' (Arweck and Stringer, eds., 2002: 3) might be ever fluctuating in a continuous adaptation to new interactions, rather than representing a progressive transition from one pole to the other.

As the day came to an end some drummers went outside the circle to smoke or chat and some stayed and drummed, but this time they were making music. People were talking for the first time since we had set off from Millbank. I spoke to a couple of them and they told me that they were there as a band called 'Rhythms of Existence' and they had known each other for a long time. They had come together on the train, some from London and some from Manchester, and all met at Millbank.

Slowly people started making their way to the nearest tube station. Some went for the all night party at the Synergy Centre. Most people were packing up whilst others were still giving out leaflets. The music had now stopped completely. I had lots of leaflets myself – many advocating a vegan diet and explaining how farming was killing the planet. I stopped to get a sandwich and although I was starving I couldn't get myself to buy any. They had no vegan sandwiches and a newly acquired moral impetus told me that I could wait until I got home.

Research Questions

As these reflections on my pilot study show, the networks I have been researching need to be considered as part of the bigger picture. They cannot be looked at separately from the Climate Movement as they are, despite demarcations, a physical part of it: the Christian members who attended the Day of Action were part of the Christian congregation and the main march. Although they started as one group emerging from the Church, they soon dispersed into the main march and lost themselves in it.

Based on this pilot study I developed four research questions. The first two research questions are concerned with investigating the bigger field, the involvement of the religious networks with the Climate Movement. Therefore (1) my thesis attempts to examine the way the networks in my study operate inside the Climate Movement, how they self-organise and expand; (2) this thesis interrogates the processes of hybridisation that take place in this heterogeneous field when networks interact with each other during collective events, as exemplified in my pilot study. As I will show in future chapters one of the most important and ongoing hybridisations in this field has been the involvement of the religious networks with the Transition Towns Movement.

Further I wished to understand the effects of these interactions on the participants themselves, and so to understand the effects of these processes at an individual level. During collective events, Christians and Muslims do sometimes address the whole assembly, in an effort to develop bridges between faith and non-faith activists, assert their own presence in the movement and receive acceptance and acknowledgement for their faith positions. As my pilot study showed, Christian activists met in the church and prayed together before joining the march. Hence the third and fourth research questions inquire into (3) the means by which faith groups maintain their faith identity in the inter-faith or secular context of the Climate Movement and (4) the role and function ritual plays in relation to activist identity and as a place-making practice.

By investigating ecological ritual in this context I can hope to establish whether it is used to bring together or demarcate the different networks in my study. I am also interested to find out if ecological ritual is a means of learning, teaching or cementing newly learned ecological behaviour. I am not strictly referring to declared 'religious ritual', but to all forms of performative and symbolic action I have encountered during the past three years in the field. A ritualised protest

march against Climate Change policy is not a private event but a public statement, intersecting with activism and political action. Blending both tradition and innovation, ecological ritual demonstrates a preoccupation with the future that is not clearly apparent in other forms of ritual and, considering its highly dynamic contemporary setting, it is not fully addressed by scholarship.

Summary of Research Questions:

My thesis sets out to explore the involvement of Christian and Muslim activists in the Climate and Transition Movements and poses four main research questions:

(RQ 1) How do the networks in my study operate inside the Climate Movement?

This is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

(RQ2) What are the processes of hybridization that take place when the faith networks become involved in the Climate and Transition Movement?

This is mainly examined in Chapter 6 and 7.

(RQ 2) How do faith groups maintain their faith identity in the inter-faith or secular context of the Climate Movement?

This is the main focus of Chapter 6, but also discussed in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

(RQ 4) What is the function (or functions) of ecological ritual in relation to processes of identity formation and place-making practices?

I will address this topic in Chapter 8 and 9.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1, the Literature Review, is organised around the research questions the present thesis is proposing to answer, and so it is organised in four sections, reviewing literature concerned with:

(RQ1) countercultural networks, (RQ 2) religion, spirituality and radical environmentalism, (RQ3)

identity, emotions and values and (RQ4) ecological ritual. I discuss in this chapter the crux of dissent between Abrahamic religionists and other environmentalists, which may consist in 'the why', the primary reason for valuing the environment or nature respectively. The emergence of 'Ecology' has brought with it a realisation that human beings are part of their 'environment', that we can not be separated from it. Ecologists who uphold this view of 'oneness' with our environment oppose the stewardship model which Abrahamic faiths use as their main platform for environmentalism. I will discuss the distinct traditions ecologists from traditional religions and the so called 'non-religious' ecologists come from, but argue that the religious versus secular dichotomy does not really function here because these traditions have incongruous relationships and attitudes towards 'nature', 'modernity' and 'science'. I will also investigate in this literature review the main influences on Climate Change discourse, such as discourses on health and wellbeing, sickness and death, the apocalypse and the divine.

In Chapter 2 I will discuss my methodology and methods. In my research I was interested in grassroots responses rather than more official positions. I wished to discover the field from the point of view of my participants. My multi-site ethnographic research was therefore primarily focused on the groups and networks who participated in the Climate Movement. In this chapter I will describe my main methods of data collection. Beginning with a 'Global Day of Action' in December 2007 which I have already described above as a pilot study and ending with a 'Post-Election Climate Vigil' in May 2010, both held in London, I followed the journey of my research by taking part in all the events I could attend as I followed the main networks in my study, four religious networks active in the Climate Movement. I observed and participated in numerous events in my field of research and I conducted in-depth interviews with activists from faith groups and other non-affiliated activists. I also carried out a survey at two Climate Camps in England and Wales to triangulate ethnographic data obtained through participant observation and interviews.

Chapter 3 puts forward three distinct theoretical models that will assist me in the analysis of my data: (1) a theoretical model of network organisation – a model that explains how the networks in my study self-organise and expand; (2) a second model that links a relational model of identity to the processes of cross-fertilisation in this field and thus helps frame the mechanism of transmission of environmental teachings and attitudes; and, finally, (3) a theoretical model of

ritual, emphasising its function in negotiating a relationship with place and consequently its role in the construction of identity.

Chapter 4 to 9 are ethnographic chapters where I analyse my data in respect to the research questions introduced above. Chapter 4 investigates the macro level of the research field as I will examine the two main networks in my study: the Climate and Transition networks. Using my own theoretical model proposed in Chapter 3 I will look at how these distinct networks organise and expand and investigate their polarised efforts towards protest and lifestyle respectively. Also in Chapter 4 I will identify two main 'global forms' or shared practices in the field, namely consensus decision making and Permaculture design.

In Chapter 5 I introduce the four religious networks in my research: Isaiah 58, Christian Ecology Link, GreenSpirit and London Islamic Network for the Environment/ Wisdom in Nature. These networks are involved in different ways in a bottom up greening of their respective faith tradition. I will show in this chapter they are also organised around the protest and lifestyle axis in the Climate field. I highlight here the demarcations and areas of conflict that emerge from their 'in between' status, as they are connected to both the more mainstream traditional religious organisations, institutions or communities and alternative networks in the Climate and Transition movements.

Chapter 6 draws a link between processes of cross-fertilisation or hybridisation in the field and processes of identity preservation or construction. I will demonstrate here that activists who have a religious identity will maintain this identity as their most salient identity, which I call primary identity. This ensures that activists can maintain a personal sense of continuity and can retain existing relations and resources as well as form and acquire new ones. By applying my own theoretical model elaborated in Chapter 3, I will show here that the transmission of discourse and cognitive and behavioural patterns is facilitated by an emotional or affective stimulation.

Chapter 7 identifies a further dimension to the model of identity explored in previous chapters. I demonstrate here that activists' explorations of spirituality and community and attitudes towards these explorations differ according to their primary identity. My data demonstrates a

departure from a spirituality oriented towards the individual towards a community-oriented spirituality. I further identified artistic practices in the Climate field as a common spiritual currency that allows for the circulation of ideas and thus facilitates processes of cross-fertilisation across the field.

Finally in Chapters 8 and 9 I will investigate ecological ritual, its role in identity construction and place-making practices. I show in these two chapters that in having a practical dimension and an affective dimension, ecological ritual contributes to the consolidation and transmission of environmental teachings and behaviours. I also show in Chapter 9 that ritual facilitates processes of identity construction through its very performance. For example Climate campers who confront the police are equally performing their protest and constructing their activist identity. I also advance the view in this chapter that faith activists maintain their primary identity through a process of affective remembrance of their respective tradition. Moreover, through ritual they lament the past and celebrate the future and can therefore eco-reform their beliefs and practices. Finally I demonstrate that ecological ritual serves a function in connecting activists to place – the planet and its inhabitants – and giving them a ‘planetary identity’, thus making Climate Change an interior concern and a matter of personal interest.

I will now proceed to look at relevant academic literature before moving on to my research methodology and theoretical models.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present chapter is organised in four sections. In the first section I review literature concerned with countercultural networks, with the view of offering a background for my investigation of how the networks in my study operate inside the Climate Movement (RQ1). Since my thesis examines the processes of hybridisation between religious networks and the activist networks of the Climate and Transition Movements (RQ2), in the second section I discuss academic literature concerned with religion, spirituality and radical environmentalism. In section three I discuss scholarly views on identity, emotions and values, a discussion which will lead my consideration of faith identities in the inter-faith or secular context of the Climate Movement (RQ3). Finally, in the fourth section I will examine debates central to my investigation of the functions of ecological ritual (RQ4).

Countercultural Networks

In the first subsection I will examine two major schools of thought in sociology, namely structural-functionalism and conflict theory, as a backdrop for the more novel approach of networks and assemblages. In the second subsection I will talk about dynamic countercultural networks, their expansion and organising processes.

Old and New Sociology: Assemblage Theory and Actor-Network-Theory

Modern critiques of sociology have noted that the word sociology, meaning ‘the science of the social’, already announces an assumption that ‘the social’ is a recognisable domain, or possibly a material quality, that can be studied (Latour, 2005: 1-20). Definitions of ‘society’ and ‘culture’ make similar implied claims of a recognisable fabric or inherent structure that marks out these ‘reality constituting terms’ (Masuzawa, 1998: 70).

When we talk about the Climate Movement, the very concept of ‘movement’ is connected to assumptions of what society is and how it operates, and theories are commonly

traceable to two main schools of thought in relation to society's structure, roles and organisation. These two social paradigms are structural - functionalism vs. conflict theory. Structural - functionalists considered society to be largely cohesively organised and tending towards equilibrium, whilst for conflict theorists, conflict created society, ensuring its renewal and re-organisation. The functionalist model is largely associated with the positivist approach to knowledge of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who most notably applied scientific understanding to the social realm. Positivist empirical methods that were used in scientific inquiry were believed by early sociologists to provide adequate means for investigating society as well. Hence Herbert Spencer, whose *Principles of Sociology* (1896) is perhaps one of the earliest influential writings of the structuralist-functionalist approach, applies laws of natural selection to the investigation of society, viewing it as an organism that adapts and thus adopts different modes of organisation when faced with selection pressures. These ideas culminated in the late twentieth century sociological writings, such as Talcott Parson's *The Evolution of Societies* (1977), Parson being himself one of the most significant figures of the functionalist school of thought (see DeLanda, 2006: 9).

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) similarly talks about social order in contrast with social anomie, which parallels individual normality and deviance. Durkheim upheld the holistic concept of society inherited from Comte and looked at the processes that ensured the harmony, social solidarity and stability of society. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim (1915) looked at the functions religion performed to satisfy “the needs” of the social system’ (Swingewood, [1984] 2000: 78) – seeing this ‘social system’ as an aggregate, but neglecting the (shared) agency of the individual who would necessarily take part in ‘the various forms of solidarity or patterns of social change’ (ibid.). However Durkheim did consider the relations and associations in the social realm and his concept of ‘social milieu’ bears a close resemblance to modern theories in sociology (see Nisbet, 1975: 252).

Conflict theory can be looked at in opposition to functionalism (Craib, 1992: 57) having roots in Marxism (Marx, 1998 [1848]) and being somewhat inherent to critical theory, feminist theory, queer theory, postmodernism and post-structuralism. In essence it highlights the importance of social change and the constant imbalances, inequalities and power struggles in

society. For conflict theorists inequalities and exploitations are central to class, race, religion or gender struggles, and society is permanently created and renewed through social conflict.

Hence if functionalists conceptualised society as an organism or a defined system, naturally tending towards equilibrium, conflict theorists tended to emphasise the permanence of conflict and change. Although social movements were seen in the 1960s, to represent a temporary state of societal entropy that will soon have its day (according to the functionalist model) it has become increasingly obvious that these were here to stay, with some theorists signalling the emergence of a 'movement society' (Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991). However it can be argued that such a view does not truly move away from a structural-functionalist outlook, but simply tries to re-imagine order, by making 'movements' part of the structure.

A novel approach to the social realm is represented by Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) and assemblage theory. This new approach is partly founded on a critique of the deeply ingrained functionalist view of (human) society as an organism, and it has its roots in the work of Bruno Latour (1988), Michel Callon (1996) and John Law (1986) (see Latour, 2005:10). The new sociology does not assume the existence of a distinct 'social' realm but accepts that the social may be at best a 'trail of associations between heterogeneous elements' (Latour, 2005: 5). I would like to emphasise here the major departure this new critical sociology makes by citing Bruno Latour's own explanation:

Whereas in the first approach [to sociology], every activity – law, science, technology, religion, organisation, politics, management, etc. – could be related to and explained by the same social aggregates *behind* all of them, in the second version of sociology there exists *nothing* behind those activities even though they may be linked in a way that does produce a society – or *doesn't* produce one. Such is the crucial point of departure between the two versions. To be social is no longer a safe and unproblematic property, it is a movement that may fail to trace any new connections and may fail to redesign any *well-formed* assemblage [author's emphasis] (Latour, 2005: 8).

Despite this major critical departure in the new approach to sociology, dislodging such entrenched concepts that have not only shaped the academic discipline of sociology but have

produced the discipline in the first instance, is a work in progress. ANT theory has an ecological approach to reality, and this is perhaps the most difficult to grasp since it requires an almost animistic understanding of the world. Tim Ingold (2011) makes this point in a staged Socratic debate between a 'social' ant and a 'solitary' spider in an essay entitled 'When *ANT* meets SPIDER: Social theory for Anthropods'. The ant explains to the spider that social relations, or relations of interaction and collaboration, are not only those between the ants in a colony of ants, but these include 'non-ants', such as 'pine needles, aphids and larvae', and 'they are caught up in [the network] just as flies, my dear spider, are caught up in your web' (Ingold, 2011:91). Ingold emphasises here that in a network, agency is shared or distributed, rather than the sole property of an 'act-ant'.

In his *A New Philosophy of Society*, Manuel DeLanda (2006) explains that, although after the late 19th century, the organism metaphor declined alongside the rejection of functionalism by conflict theorists and phenomenologists, a more sophisticated and inconspicuous form of the organism metaphor dominates most schools of sociology:

This version involves not an analogy but a general theory about the relations between parts and wholes that constitute a seamless totality or that display an organic unity. The basic concept of this theory is what we may call *relations of interiority*, the component parts are constituted by the very relations they have to other parts in the whole (DeLanda, 2006: 9).

Hence the theory of assemblages is, according to DeLanda, the main critical alternative to theories of 'organic totalities' (ibid.: 10), theories which make this underlying assumption of unity and reciprocity between parts and the whole. Assemblages, in contrast, are characterised by *relations of exteriority* (DeLanda, 2006:10). Such relations do not imply reciprocity, since 'a relation might change without the terms changing' (Deleuze, 2002:55 cited in DeLanda, 2006:11). In assemblage theory the whole is not a sum of its parts. This is an important difference because in assemblage theory a 'component part' may be assumed to function differently in various contexts, when detached from the original assemblage.

Assemblage theory and ANT represent the basis for a new critical sociology, a sociology that is not concerned with 'society' as an existing self-contained realm limited to humans, but 'a

sociology of associations' that is instead concerned with 'collectives' (Latour, 2005: 9, 14). ANT is in essence an application of semiotics to the material, thus mapping relations that are both material and conceptual.

Dynamic Countercultural Networks

Two central arguments made by ANT are important in the investigation of the Climate networks in my study: (1) ANT proposes that 'entities take their form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other entities' (Law, 1999, 5), and (2) ANT maintains that both the actor and the network are essentially the same thing; an actor is a network and a network is an actor, just as a shuttle flying into space is not just an object but the myriad of relations or connections that make this possible (Latour, 2011). The Climate networks in my study are in interaction with each other. They are also in interaction with other networks, all of which actively shape these networks. But what makes or keeps these networks countercultural?

Manuel Castells (2000) argues that our contemporary society, prefigured in the wake of the Information Age, is a network society, where state formations and hierarchical and patriarchal organisations are being actively replaced, challenged and opposed by expanding dynamic networks. The Internet, as a hypertext, facilitates this process (Castells, 2000: 695). Castells understands information technology as material culture, or as a socially embedded process, rather than an exogenous factor affecting society. In his article 'Towards a Sociology of the Network Society', Castells (2000) identifies three main dimensions that promote social change: (1) the information technology revolution, which is a powerful component of multi-dimensional social change; (2) globalisation based in the new communication media and the information revolution, through which complex global systems can be simultaneously affected and in interaction; and (3) the internet as hypertext, 'the common frame of reference for symbolic processing of all sources and all messages' (Castells, 2000: 694). Further on Castells offers the following definition for networks:

Networks are dynamic, self-evolving structures, which, powered by information technologies and communicating with the same digital language, can grow and include all social expressions, compatible with each network's goals (Castells, 2000: 697).

Castells (2000: 696) proposes that in order to conceptualise network relationships we need to focus on three distinct areas: value making, relation making and decision making. He goes on to propose that strategists, researchers, designers are in charge of value making – therefore co-shaping networks in a directed way.

Castells proposes that a network can expand indefinitely as long as the networks included in the meta-structure are compatible (Castells, 2000: 697). The Internet removed the prior limitations that networks would have encountered and gave them an unlimited possibility of operation and expansion, as networks are connected via the Internet across the globe. They expand by incorporating other networks, by reprogramming opposite networks and 'scripting new codes' or new values in 'the goals organising their performance' (Castells, 2000: 695). Here is how Castells explains this:

A network is a set of interconnected nodes. Networks are flexible, adaptive structures that powered by information technology, can perform any task that has been programmed in the network. They can expand indefinitely, incorporating any new node by simply reconfiguring themselves, on the condition that these new nodes do not represent an obstacle to fulfilling key instructions in their program [...] Naturally, networks based on alternative values also exist, and their social morphology is similar to that of dominant networks, so that social conflicts take the shape of network based struggles to reprogram opposite networks from the outside. How? By scripting new codes (new values, for instance) in the goals organising the performance of the network. This is why the main social struggles of the information age lie in the redefinition of cultural codes in the human mind (Castells, 2000: 695).

Hence, networks' ability to grow and expand on a horizontal platform (the Internet) is precisely the tool that enables them to gradually eliminate hierarchical and patriarchal forms of organisation (Castells, 2000: 695). This expansion is not limited to a particular sphere; a network is

not restricted in its interaction, but can operate across traditional boundaries. For example, in a recent campaign (March, 2012) the Ben and Jerry's corporation launched a new product in the UK, 'Apple-y Ever After', a new flavoured ice-cream which supports gay marriages. The values being promoted or the new codes being scripted in the networks involved in this process (including distributors, consumers, followers on Twitter or Facebook) traverse and erode the traditional boundaries between political, religious or economic spheres.

Stephen Collier and Aihwa Ong (2005) posit that the debates on globalisation follow two distinct trends; on the one hand some authors focus on global cities or the network society, as discussed above, whilst others look at localities and how these respond to the pressures of globalisation (Collier & Ong, 2005: 3). Collier and Ong propose that rather than focusing on the systemic shifts from local to global or the effects of the global on the local, both of which are harder to quantify, it is more pragmatic to look at the by-products of these processes, such as technoscience, material technology or specialised social expertise, which the authors understand as 'global forms'. Global forms have

a capacity of de-contextualisation and re-contextualisation, abstract ability and movement, across diverse social and cultural situations and spheres of life (Collier & Ong, 2005: 11).

Such global forms define new material, collective and discursive practices, which the authors refer to as global assemblages, and therefore pose new (global) ethical questions. As a result contemporary practices are subject to ethical reflection, giving rise to reflective practices that are technological, political and ethical (Collier & Ong, 2005: 6).

Manuel DeLanda (2006: 13) argues that an assemblage is subject to processes of 'territorialisation' which stabilise its identity or the sharpness of its boundaries, or 'deterritorialisation' which in turn destabilise the assemblage. DeLanda explains that '[a]ny process which either destabilises spatial boundaries or increases internal heterogeneity is considered deterritorializing' (DeLanda, 2006: 13). He goes on to suggest that communication technology represents such a process of 'deterritorialisation', since it enables social networks to form without being bound by spatial boundaries.

In chapter 3 I will make use of the main concepts outlined above and put forward my own network model for dynamic countercultural networks that will help me analyse my data.

Religion, Spirituality and Radical Environmentalism

My second research question inquires into the processes of hybridization that take place when religious networks become involved in the Climate and Transition Movements. The religious activists in my study come from distinct religious traditions whereas my research shows that many of the non-religious activists reject traditional or institutionalised religion or self-identify as 'spiritual but not religious'. Moreover environmentalism is considered by some scholars to have a spiritual dimension (Oelschlaeger, 1996; Keller & Kearns, 2007) or even to represent a religion in its own right (Taylor, 2010). Therefore a distinction between religious and non-religious activists does not follow from an unproblematic religious vs. secular divide.

In his article 'From Deep Ecology to Radical Environmentalism', Bron Taylor (2001) argued that 'although participants in countercultural movements often eschew the label religion, these are religious movements, in which these persons find ultimate meaning and transformative power in nature' (2001: 175). Elsewhere Bron Taylor (2010) considered the evolving field of environmental activism diachronically and posited that radical environmentalism could be understood as 'dark green religion'. Taylor identified the birth year of this new, unnoticed religion as 1859, marked by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (Taylor, 2010: 200). This would imply that the participants in my research did not in fact encounter a secular movement in their involvement with the Climate Movement but a covertly religious one. Here is how Taylor describes 'dark green religion':

Dark green religion is like a phantom. It is unnamed and has no institutions officially devoted to its promotion; no single sacred text that its devotees can plant in hotel rooms in hopes of reaping a future harvest of souls; no identified religious hierarchy or charismatic figure responsible for spreading the faith, ministering to the faithful, or practicing its

rituals. Yet with alertness and the right lenses, the apparition appears.

It can be found in the minds and hearts of individuals who invent and are drawn to organizations that express its central convictions and moral commitments. It has charismatic figures and bureaucratic hierarchies devoted to its globalization. It is reinforced and spread through artistic forms that often resemble, and are sometimes explicitly designed, as religious rituals. It seeks to destroy forms of religiosity incompatible with its own moral and spiritual perceptions. It is considered dangerous by some, while others see it as offering salvation (Taylor, 2010: ix).

My research will also partly investigate this claim, particularly trying to understand what happens in the encounter between what Taylor describes as a secretly invasive, fast proliferating, 'dark green religion' and seemingly incompatible Abrahamic forms of religiosity.

Scholarly debates about religion were often shaped by the changes brought about by the Information Age, such as the countercultural reformulations profiled in the previous section. Spirituality is often viewed or described in opposition to religion, because the former does not have a traditional, institutional or hierarchical organisation. As future chapters will show both religious and non-religious activists often experiment with new forms of spirituality.

Religion and Spirituality

In Britain religion has been reported to have taken a distinctive route since the 1960s. The many different immigrant communities that have since established themselves here have produced a religious diversity that is having 'a lasting effect on many aspects of British religious life' (Davie, 1994:3). Although evidently belonging to the Protestant North of Europe rather than the Catholic South, Britain, and specifically England, is only just still maintaining a distinctive religious profile, as it is culturally closer to what is described as the secular region of Europe (*la region laique*), represented by France, Belgium and the Netherlands (Stoetzel, 1983: 89-91 cited by Davie, 1994:13). Apart from the declining numbers in religious practitioners, an important British trend

was recognised as ‘believing without belonging’ to any religious institution and in turn taken to signify proof of private religion or alternative spirituality (Davie, 1994: 93-116).

The trend towards secularisation in modern Western societies is connected with the concept of disenchantment. ‘Disenchantment’ is a sociological concept originally used by Max Weber (1946 [1918]: 155) to describe a complex process of increased rationalisation and intellectualisation in modern societies. For Weber himself the term was ambivalent and carried both positive and negative connotations (both promise and concern for the future), a fact also reflected in its present use (Koshul: 2005). Thus disenchantment is used to describe a post-Enlightenment, rational, modern, secular world, free from ‘deception’ and ‘superstition’ as well as a society that has lost authentic meaning and has become standardised and bureaucratic, lacking subjective experiences.

In his editorial introduction to *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity*, Paul Heelas (1998) observes the diverse, fragmented nature of today’s religious world and distinguishes in Durkheimian terms between what used to be a religion formulated for the group – with restrictions and obligations – and what has today become a religion customised to the needs of the individual; free, private and optional. Referring to these ‘atoms of religion’, Ninian Smart observed that a growing number of people in the Western world ‘make up their own religion’ and that ‘communication and the Internet will no doubt facilitate this process’ (Smart, 1998: 572-592). Referring to the New Age Movement Paul Heelas contends that ‘instead of authoritative narratives or other forms of knowledge providing truth, ‘truth’ is seen in terms of ‘what works for me’(1998:5) or ‘what rings true to your inner self’(1996:21).

In their *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead (2005) distinguish religion from spirituality by juxtaposing the beliefs and practices of a Christian congregation to that of a network of spiritual seekers. They contend that whilst religion is concerned with objective roles, duties and obligations, spirituality is concurrent with a ‘subjective turn in the modern culture’ and is mainly predicated on inner, subjective life. From this stand point

the spiritual revolution can be said to take place when ‘holistic’ activities having to do with subjective-life spirituality attract more people than do ‘congregational’ activities having to do with life as religion (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005: 7).

Spirituality is often understood as a loose, floating compound of beliefs and practices divorced from religious traditions, and predicated on the self (Heelas, 1996; Lewis & Melton, 1992). Moreover spirituality was often seen as alternative or fringe – a notion that has more recently been contested by scholars, both by challenging the mainstream/alternative boundary (Pearson, 2002: 1-12) but also by looking more holistically at the religious scene of the 21st century in a historic context. Hence in their editorial introduction to *Beyond New Age: Exploring Alternative Spirituality*, Steven Sutcliffe and Marion Bowman (2000) look at contemporary spirituality through the prism of vernacular religion, pointing out that

[a]cademic studies of religion [...] have tended to concentrate on ‘official religion’, concerned primarily with theology, philosophy and group ritual. ‘Popular’ and ‘folk’ views and practices outside this fairly narrow focus have been treated as quaint, mistaken, superstitious or deviant depending on the context (Sutcliffe & Bowman, 2000: 6).

Further, Sutcliffe and Bowman note that the language of the alternative spirituality of the 1980s and 1990s is often concerned with the self: ‘doing what feels right’, ‘taking responsibility for your own spiritual life’, ‘seeking what works for you’ (ibid.: 7), which is in line with the current ‘privatisation of religion’ as well as a certain subversion against religious authority (ibid.: 7,8).

As I will show in Chapter 7, my research attests to an important new trend: spiritual practices are beginning to be formulated for the group rather than the individual. I will show in this chapter that climate spirituality signals a transition between a spirituality for the self toward a spirituality that is formulated for the service of the community. This trend is evidenced more widely in alternative networks, having important implications for the study of religions. Hence Dominic Corrywright (2009) contends that ‘practices of healing among alternative spiritualities provide evidence for the re-emergence of religiosity’ and point to a ‘re-enchanted modern world’ (2009:1). Moreover Corrywright shows here that the contemporary preoccupation with ‘wellbeing’ has an important social dimension, as the wellbeing of the individual is dependent on the wellbeing of

their network and community (2009: 2, 10). As I will further demonstrate in future chapters, in my field of research the wellbeing of the individual is dependent on the wellbeing of the planet.

Climate Activism as Religious: Costs, Compensators and a Special Device

[A] belief in man-made Climate Change ... is capable, if genuinely held, of being a philosophical belief for the purpose of the 2003 Religion and Belief Regulations (Justice Michael Burton quoted by The Telegraph, 03/11/09 - see Adams & Gray, 2009).

The above quotation refers to the ruling supporting the claim of constructive dismissal of an employee who refused to take a flight on behalf of his company, as he considered the justification for travel disproportionate with the carbon emissions his flight would generate. It was therefore ruled in a court of law that his 'belief' in Climate Change was 'genuinely held', and therefore it was as unfair to ask him to fly as it would be, for example, to ask a Catholic to work in an euthanasia clinic or a Muslim to handle pork products.

Climate activism should be, according to some theoretical positions, very improbable. Mancur Olson's (1965) highly debated theory of collective action is based on economic principles, using concepts such as 'goods', 'costs' and 'benefits', and maintaining as its basic tenet that 'unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals *will not* act to achieve their common or group interest [my emphasis]' (1965:2). The main reason for this is the negative relation between the number of people in a group and their individual effectiveness in bringing about the public good (see Opp, 2009: 52). For example, if a group of ten people take collective action their individual effectiveness is '1/10', a tenth of the total effectiveness that can be claimed by the group; however, the larger the group, the more diminished the personal effectiveness in achieving the public good. Moreover Olson talks about those beneficiaries to the public good who do not participate in bringing it about, the so-called 'free riders'. Olson maintains that if rational, self-interested individuals think that their action is not required in the achievement of a cause they will not act but enjoy the free ride (see Opp, 2009:59). In an article entitled 'Collective Action on Climate Change: the Logic of a Regime Failure', Paul

Harris (2007) uses Olson's collective action theory to explain the inaction of the climate regime by arguing that, although the right ingredients are there to stimulate collective action as per Olson's theory, i.e. the public good is well stated, it is precisely the scale of the problem and consequently the necessary mobilisation, that is acting against it; the bigger the group the more unlikely it is for collective action to take place.

The Stark-Bainbridge theory of religion (Stark & Bainbridge, 1979, 1987), a theory that is often applied to New Religious Movements, states that religion is most distinctly defined by its offering of 'compensators' instead of real rewards. In a world where real rewards are scarce, reward-seeking humans will therefore accept 'compensators' instead, which are in essence intangible, unverifiable promises: a better afterlife, a future ability to fly, a reunion with friends and family 'on the other side'. Compensators have a tendency to be incredibly generous offerings; they are after all 'unsecured'. They also have a tendency to escalate concomitant with recruiting needs; the more generous the promises, the more followers might come (see Bainbridge & Jackson, 1981: 115). Present costs and sacrifices are thus justified.

It can be argued that radical environmentalism and climate activism in particular are likened to religion because of the high cost and the sacrifices demanded from the individual (such as sleeping in a tent for weeks on end, in the rain and without any of the comforts of modern living or losing one's job) coupled with the absence of an immediate, tangible reward.

In the next section I will address the role of identity, values and emotions in climate activism.

Climate Activism: Identity, Emotions and Values

In the present section I review scholarly literature concerned with issues of identity, emotions and values relevant to my research field. My third research question asked how did religious activists and groups maintain their faith identity in the inter-faith or secular context of the Climate Movement. The 'secular' context of the Climate Movement must be understood in the light of the complexities discussed in the previous two sections. Yet I will investigate in future chapters how

activists who hold a broad religious identity, such as Christian or Muslim, operate inside the Climate Movement or in the dark green territory of this movement; how they adopt a new discourse; how they change or hybridise these identities so that they can become Green Christians or Green Muslims, given the inherent conflicts between anthropocentric vs. biocentric values, and the subversive, anti-institutionalised religion discourse in these countercultural movements.

The Climate Movement is not just a political movement where activists adhere to a political platform but can remain largely unaffected by its ethos and values. Some scholars (Melucci, 1996; Touraine, 1981) have suggested that new social movements (beginning with the 1960s) are not really political but cultural movements; they do not place emphasis on social transformation but rather focus on a personal transformation or 'inner work' that can ultimately provoke a social shift. Broadly, social theorists emphasise that contemporary social movements have the role of questioning society rather than making a real, revolutionary claim to power.

As I showed in the first section of the present chapter, some theorists (Castells, 2000; Collier & Ong, 2005) believe that contemporary countercultural networks usurp and replace social structure without the need to make a revolutionary stand but by incorporating other networks and re-scripting new codes and values in their organisation. The Internet and mass media in general uphold and offer an unprecedented power to question society and its present-day structures and values (see for example Armstrong, 2009). The Internet, films and documentaries represent a global media and Bron Taylor talks about the 'viruslike' spreading of dark green spirituality through such media (Taylor, 2010: xi). This media not only presents a series of facts about Climate Change but it can also stimulate affective responses and thus promote new values and behaviours.

Identity and Emotions

Regarding identity, two broad schools of thought have been reported; one takes identities or social identities as given and assumes that their effects can be measured sociologically, psychologically or linguistically, whilst the other school of thought understands identities as processes evolving organically and in real time out of communication practices (see Giles & Coupland, 1991: 196). However, new approaches to the concept of identity tend to negotiate an intermediate position

between a static view of personal identity and the more unstable, perpetually changing, socially constructed identity. In this intermediate perspective the self is understood as relational (Fogel, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2001; Andersen & Chen, 2002), whereby 'the self can be conceived of as comprised of multiple identities varying in salience' (Stryker, 1997 cited by Klandermans, 2000: 246).

New theoretical approaches to identity via emotions, maintain that identity is an emotional and relational experience, rather than a cognitive representation (Fogel, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2001, Anderson & Chen, 2002). Hence a sense of identity

comes into existence when the emotional experience that accompanies a currently ongoing relationship stabilises into a primary orientation toward the relationship (Kunnen et al, 2001: 207).

Identity theorists maintain that identity arises through developing a sense of continuity and uniqueness (Bosma & Kunnen, (eds), 2001:227). This sense of continuity is maintained through self-attentive processes, as Carl James contends in his definition of social identity:

[T]he collective self-awareness that a given group embodies and reflects [...] and the self-attentive processes of the individual in relation to his or her culture (James, 2003: 39).

Alberto Melucci (1988) approached social movements through the concept of identity. Melucci thought that collective action was 'never solely based on cost-benefit calculation' (1988:343), as some earlier approaches to social movements maintained (see Olson, 1965 discussed in the previous section; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Instead he proposed that movements were sustained by a 'collective identity', a concept that Melucci saw as a process, 'because it is constructed and negotiated through repeated activation of the relationships that unite individuals' (ibid. 342). Melucci considered aspects that were somewhat neglected by the previous analyses; emotional investments and emotional recognition as fundamental dimensions for collective action (ibid. 343).

Karl-Dieter Opp (2009) reconstructed Melucci's definition of collective identity thus:

A collective identity exists, by definition, if there is a group (i.e. individuals with at least one common goal) with common beliefs, with common normative convictions, that is

connected by social relationships (i.e. there is a social network) and by emotional bonds (Opp, 2009: 210).

With regard to religious identity, contemporary theorists maintain that this is multi-layered and overlapping (Tweed, 1997; Wuthnow, 2005: 276-278). My informants were often involved in a variety of religious networks, such as religious retreats, festivals, monastic communities and so on. Their home church or local mosque would have only represented one of these networks and so their Christian or Muslim identity is not taken here to be rigidly defined or monolithic.

As I will demonstrate in future chapters, my research shows that Christian and Muslim activists are primarily motivated in their activism by their religious faith. Most of my religious informants were attending to their ecological concerns as a way of practising their faith, rather than through civic or secular green values. Their faith had become imbued with ecological beliefs and practices, or perhaps hybridised with/ 'attracted towards' dark green beliefs and practices, given their involvement in the Climate Movement.

Although theoretical approaches to relational identity often describe identity as a 'self-organisation process', the process should not be assumed to be in the hands of the individual – it is not a voluntary or intentional process. Douglas Davies (2011) advances in his *Emotion, Identity and Religion*, that

different religious traditions prefer certain patterns of emotion, fostering and managing them at individual and community levels of identity. (Davies, 2011: 1)

I will refer to the concept of an emotional pattern in chapter three when I will put forward a theoretical model on identity. The next subsection will look more closely at scholarly literature concerned with the values and emotions involved in climate activism or environmentalism more generally.

Values and Emotions for Acting on Climate Change

Anthony Leiserowitz (2006) showed that risk assessment and decision-making concerning Climate Change is first and foremost an affective process rather than a primarily cognitive activity.

A change in cultural and personal values as well as the emotional dimension is often implied by public voices that address the topic of Climate Change and suggest that acting on climate change may presuppose 'a change of hearts and minds' (Obama, 2008) or an inner-transformation akin to a 'religious conversion' (Williams, 2009) and that Climate Change cannot be tackled only economically or politically 'as it requires a profound ethical and philosophical change that can only take place in our heart, a revolution of the spirit' (Monbiot, 2007).

Other commentators contend that humans do not have any specific emotional resources or values to sustain environmentalism and are instead 'recycling' old religious sentiments. In an article entitled 'The Meaningless Ritual of Recycling', Timothy Cooper argues that recycling is a redemptive act for the guilt we feel as consumers. In other words, instead of changing our ways we 'just do our bit' (Cooper, 2006). More elaborately, in an essay entitled 'Green Guilt', Stephen T. Asma (2010) debates the source of present day environmental guilt, making reference to Nietzsche's thesis that religious emotions are still present in a post-Christian world. He therefore makes a case for environmentalism being a convenient extension of our atrophied Jewish and Christian morality and more generally a new, seemingly secular, outlet for perennial religious emotions, such as guilt or indignation. Asma writes:

[e]nvironmentalism, as a substitute for religion, has come to [the] rescue [referring to feelings of unworthiness]. Nietzsche's argument about an ideal God and guilt can be replicated in a new form. We need a belief in a pristine environment because we need to be cruel to ourselves as inferior beings, and we need that because we have these aggressive instincts that cannot be let out (Asma: 2010: 11).

Asma goes on to suggest different parallels between religion and environmentalism, from apocalyptic eco-narratives and present day eco-prophets to ascetic self-denial where 'one does not seek to reduce one's carbon footprint so much as to eliminate one's very being' (ibid.). This last seems to be an unlikely reaction to Climate Change and, in contrast, other scholars discuss a contemporary trend towards developing feelings of responsibility (rather than guilt as Asma suggests) for the planetary health (Kempton, 1997:14). Dominic Corrywright shows that

‘wellbeing’ has developed an integral social dimension: ‘the pursuit of wellbeing then becomes a purpose of social action and an objective for social justice’ (Corrywright, 2009: 10, 2)

As I will show in future chapters (Chapter 9), activists do not aim to reach their audience through ‘guilt’ but ‘love’. This is what motivates them to act, as they are genuinely concerned and want to care for the planet and its species, for the poor people in countries affected by Climate Change, for the future generations that will suffer the dire consequences of our action or inaction in the present. It could be argued that communicating these values is an affective process and not a cognitive representation and that some commentators who do not share environmentalists’ values simply cannot understand their concerns. This lack of understanding might in itself suggest that values such as ‘environmentalism’ and ‘universalism’ are not recycled Christian values, but post-material values (see Lassander, 2010) and hence they are hard to ‘translate’, communicate or make explicit across a range of cultural and social backgrounds.

According to Ronald Inglehart’s (1977) thesis in his *Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*, Maslow’s pyramid of needs operates also at the larger, societal scale. Collective material security, as primary security and material needs were met over a significant period of time, led in the West to a change of values oriented towards post-material concerns. Mika Lassander’s specific research on post-material value change in Britain and Finland supports Inglehart’s thesis, as Lassander shows that environmentalism and universalism belong to such a new cluster of recently developed values (Lassander, 2010). Paul Heelas qualifies this change of values as a leap from security to ‘quality of life’, ‘the cultivation of personal inner-riches’, with an emphasis on ‘self-expression and self-realisation’ and contends that ‘expressivism is now embedded in British culture’ (Heelas, 1992: 141).

Considering Inglehart’s thesis on post-material value change, we can speculate that Climate Change might function as an unsettling factor at the very base of the needs pyramid: food shortages and environmental migration is not a calming thought for a society’s collective pyramid of needs. It can be speculated that Climate Change itself could produce a societal change of values. Phil Macnaughton and John Urry (1998) discuss the implications of living with unprecedented global risk in a ‘detraditionalised society’ and contend that in the late 1990s a new form of

environmentalism began to emerge that was different from the preceding ‘road rage’, ‘animal rage’ and ‘oil rage’ of the earlier decades (Macnaughton & Urry, 1998: 70). According to these authors this new form of environmental activism is heavily positioned ‘against the system’ (hence demanding global change), is based on grassroots organisations and direct action and has a ‘heroic’ character. The environmentalism of the 1980s had more cultural elements, such as lifestyle, vegan diets, concern for animals, wholefood shops and open-air festivals (ibid. 56). Of course these earlier trends continue to be present in contemporary eco-activism but Climate Change brings a new global dimension to environmental activism, and future chapters will profile these new directions.

Ecological Ritual

In his article ‘Ritual Theory and the Environment’ Ronald Grimes begins by showing that despite the fact that eco-ritual might not necessarily seem like a pragmatic solution for alleviating the environmental crisis, many (groups and individuals) believe it to be one ‘if not *the* (sic) answer [as] they consider it urgent that humans learn, or re-learn, ritual ways of becoming attuned to their environments’ (Grimes, 2003: 31). Before engaging ritual theory, Grimes exemplifies some directions in eco-ritual, such as rituals that aim to mythologize new stories for the emergence of life (like The Cosmic Walk and The Universe Story – see Appendix 1 for a detailed discussion of this ritual); rituals or rather ritualists that aim to restore degraded environments through practical, yet ritualised action - such as ritualised prairie burning; rituals that aim ‘to cultivate a felt connection with the earth and its creatures’ (like The Council of all Beings – see Appendix 1); and also ritualised performances that intend to bring ‘nature’ back into ‘culture’ or vice-versa (like for example ‘the ‘theatre of confluence’, where the actors are blizzards, sunsets, rivers or mountains).

Those called to do the job of creating ecological rituals need to be multilateral ‘scientist-shaman-performer-storytellers’ (Briggs 1994: 124 quoted in Grimes: 2003:31), versed in both tradition and innovation, as ecological rituals need to be rediscovered and re-instated as well as created and developed. To this list of intellectual attributes we may add a list of practical skills.

Often, in eco-rituals, symbolic actions have a practical purpose or outcome. For example planting trees may be part of a ritual but this is after all a practical action for environmentalists. This may be contrasted to Heestermann's view (when referring to ritual more generally) that 'ritual has nothing to say about the world, its concerns and conflicts, it proposes on the contrary a separate self-contained world ruled exclusively by the comprehensive and exclusive order of ritual' (Heestermann, 1985: 3 quoted by Smith, 2005 [1987]: 38).

According to some scholars, eco-ritual is a form of activism. In their editorial introduction to *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth* (2007) Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller contend that '[ecological] ritual practices support the wider practices of environmental activism and help to activate or perform hope in the face of despair' (ibid.:16). Kearns and Keller's 'transdisciplinary theological colloquia' consist of a collection of papers presented at the 'Ground for Hope' conference held by Drew University in New Jersey. The conference, hosting eco-feminists, eco-theologians from various traditions, philosophers, scientists, ethicists, etc., was interspersed with ritual tree planting and accompanied by poetry recital as well as a more ceremonial ecumenical service. Eco-ritual is also offered in *Ecospirit* as a resource for future interfaith worship and the authors conclude by identifying some of the liturgical elements that were used in its creation and explaining their relevance: the Buddhist bell, the shofar (the biblical ram's horn trumpet) and biblical psalms (Nickell & Troster, 2007: 517-30). Other rituals from the 'Ground for Hope' conference adapted biblical text and even political/economic readings from the *New York Times* on *The National Council of Women of Kenya* (Kearns & Keller, eds., 2007: 531-535).

The view of ritual as a form of activism resonates with earlier interpretations of ritual, such as that of Emile Durkheim who believed that rites had a moral and social function, assembling individuals so that they can act in common (1995 [1915]: 414-65). Durkheim further observed that magic and religion were complementary in their fulfilment of a private and respectively a public or communal role (Durkheim, 1995 [1915]: 47). However Durkheim was criticised for his reductionist approach (Pals, 2006: 115-18), and also for having neglected the individual in his preoccupation with the social (van Gennep, 1975 [1913]: 208).

Grimes proposes that ritual is not only a mode of supporting existing world views and ethics but also a way of discovering and fostering new ones (Grimes: 2003: 33-4). He notes that most Religious Studies scholars are inclined to recognise that ritual can have 'expressive value but not causal force or formative power' and that the consequential connection between ritual and ethics (in this order) is neglected by religionists and theorists alike (ibid.: 34). In other words, for Grimes, rituals are not only a way of performing existing beliefs but could be a way of discovering new ones.

Some performative approaches to ritual, such as Victor Turner's (1982) or Richard Schechner's (1993) focus specifically on the formative power of ritual. For Victor Turner rituals mediate cultural changes. Although Turner does not use the word 'mutation', he is in fact describing a sudden transformation that propels participants to a new understanding. He describes it as 'a co-adaptation', 'a leap to a new cultural knowledge' (Turner, 1982: 225). Schechner endorses Turner's search for ritual's creative power and explains that ritual is 'not only a conservator of evolutionary and cultural behaviour, but [also] a generator' (Schechner, 1993: 255). In his *The Future of Ritual*, drawing on play, art, choreography, theatre and ritual exploration, Schechner thinks that ritual is (and has always been) a way of acting out our dreams - not only human dreams but all dreams, since he agrees with Turner that ritual is hard-wired and located in our reptilian brain (in the palaeo-cortex).

Grimes (2003) does not take a 'cultural' view of ritual. He addresses the tradition/innovation dilemma as follows; if rituals are responsible for reiterating the past and hence maintaining the socio-political order, how can eco-rituals help? He notes that ritual change, ritual innovation and ritual performance are not easily (or without difficulty) dealt with by ritual theory. Hence he differs from both Stanley Tambiah's (1979: 119) definition of ritual (ritual is characterised by formality, rigidity and redundancy) and also with Roy A. Rappaport's (1999: 164-215) conservative understanding of ritual, who understands it as a way of maintaining conventions and obligations. However, some scholars aim to demonstrate that even seemingly anti-political rites could in fact function as a re-instatement of the very social order they parody, by providing an outlet for

collective feelings of frustration and therefore deflating an existing revolutionary spirit (Stallybrass and White, 2005 [1986]: 139-60).

The distinction between ritual, performance, storytelling and other forms of dramatic expression is yet another area of blurred boundaries. We could attempt to differentiate between them by deciding that whilst in the telling of a story, the narrator, protagonist and listener are separated, in performances the narrator-protagonist is only separated from his audience-listener, and finally they all come together in ritual. Yet stories and performances are not unchanged, inert recapitulations. Even film, that in being imprinted appears invariable, is not static given the active, participatory role of its audience, the freedom viewers have to derive new meanings that were not necessarily 'encoded in a film's textual organisation' (Wright, 2007:18). Rituals presuppose a degree of improvisation, where the outcome is not decided on, a useful distinction perhaps in comparing ritual and performance.

Grimes cautions against the danger of setting ritual against performance (2002:152, 2003:37), which is generally described as playful, creative or original. Other scholars establish a dichotomy between the old style of worship and the new postmodern revisionist, provocative and progressive approach to worship that attempts to address current, contemporary issues (Guest, 2002:35-56). As playfulness is often used to describe postmodernism and playing is believed to be a serious business by some theorists (playing as a way of learning or dealing with anxiety – see Schechner, 1993:25), some contemporary forms of ritual might qualify as means of learning new ways of being whilst in a safe or at least safer frame.

To solve the problem of what a ritual is and when a particular action clearly qualifies as ritual, some neurophysiological investigations of ritual (such as biogenetic structuralism – see Grimes, 2003: 37) focus on the physiological changes that occur during ritual enactment. At first sight this could aid the charting of ritual territory; if certain chemicals are emitted in the brain, we would (potentially) be able to differentiate more clearly between ritual and related categories. Grimes reproduces a typical definition for ritual from the biogenetic school that states:

[Ritual is] a sequence of behaviour that (1) is structured or patterned; (2) is rhythmic and repetitive (to some degree at least), that is, tends to recur in the same or nearly the same form with some regularity; (3) acts to synchronise affective, perceptual-cognitive, and motor processes within the central nervous system of individual participants; and (4) most particularly, synchronises these processes among the various individual participants.

(d'Aquili and Newberg: 1999: 89 quoted by Grimes, 2003, 37).

Ritual is connected to identity and place-making practices. Grimes notes that there are significant similarities between biogenetic structuralism and some ethnographic testimonies concerning ritual, whereby: 'ritual activity facilitates the penetration and embodiment of symbols into human selves and societies, entraining these symbols into an effective system' (ibid.: 38). Place-making can be understood both as making sense of place and also, more importantly, negotiating relationships and exchanges with place. Thus participant can trace their needs and wants through the ritual process, they can play out their very existence and the conditions place itself needs to meet to sustain them. Graham Harvey recognises ritual as being central to the negotiations of consuming relationships, the relationships between consumer and that which becomes consumed (Harvey, 2006: 13).

The connection between ritual and place (local or global) is very important in the study of ecological ritual and I will address this in Chapter 3 when I will put forward my own theoretical model on ritual. Secondary sources suggest that in some ecological rituals the healing intention is directed to Antarctica and its inhabitants (Boomer-Trent, 2007: 20-32). Apart from the obvious healing intention, there could also be a desire to find a *terra nullis*, untarnished and 'untouched', where we could all come together. Ronald Grimes (2003) contends that ritualists perform

[...] to discover ways of inhabiting a place. This is the noetic, or the divinatory, function of the ritual; ritual helps people figure out, divine, even construct a cosmos (Grime, 2003: 44).

In order to construct a new ecological order, the element of innovation and improvisation carries promising prospects. In his *Ethics of Place*, Mick Smith points out that

[n]o matter how hard it tries to break free and re-imagine a new order of things, environmentalism is inevitably caught up in current social practices and worldviews (Smith, 2001: 4).

Noam Chomsky might readily endorse this inability to overcome current practices and even add a certain degree of fatalism, given his position that intellectual structures are not learned, but inherited, just like physical structures, growing in comparable ways and ultimately dependent on genetic predispositions. For Chomsky progress is simply not possible in certain areas, since our linguistic structures are limited and ‘our minds are specifically adapted to develop certain theories’ (Chomsky, 1984: 101). Considering this, it might prove really difficult to reinvent our stories so that we can get away from self-fulfilling apocalyptic prophecies. According to Richard Schechner, ritual, as a tightrope between tradition and innovation, is indeed our best hope to avoid self-extinction (1993: 263). In chapter three I will put forward three theoretical models that will help me analyse my data.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In this chapter I discuss my research approach, drawing on relevant academic literature as well my own experience. I do this in three sections: in the first section I discuss the research field and its boundaries from an Actor-Network-Theory standpoint; in section two I outline my approach to collecting and interpreting data; in the third and final section I consider some ethical problems that arose from my fieldwork, provide a brief personal background and address the insider-outsider polarity for both researcher and participants.

The Research Field

I started my fieldwork by attending the *Global Day of Action* with Christian Ecology Link members in December 2007 as a one day pilot study – which became the prologue of this thesis. Following this, in August 2008, at the Climate Camp in Kingsnorth, I spent eight days with (full-fledged and temporary) members of the Christian Anarchist group Isaiah 58. This was a first opportunity to immerse myself in the field and much of my subsequent research has roots here. At Climate Camp I met other groups and individuals, or received information that led to interviews, conferences, religious services and so on. Although this was too brief and busy a time to forge closer ties I reencountered some of them at Climate Camp and thereafter. I ended up focusing on four different networks that are, in different ways, very much concerned with Climate Change: Christian Ecology Link (CEL), London Islamic Environmental Network (LINE) now Wisdom in Nature (WIN), GreenSpirit and Isaiah 58 (I58).

Of course there are many other groups, networks and unaffiliated religious people that are active in the Climate Movement. Because I began this research with a historical understanding of

the environmental movement, I explicitly sought to investigate what I perceived as the new arrivals on the scene, primarily members of the Abrahamic faiths: Christians, Muslims and Jews. I also proposed to look at the British scene and to focus on grassroots organisations. From the point of view of Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) which will be discussed below, these were my actors to be 'followed around' (see Latour, 2005). Since this is a global campaign, actors travel and expand their networks globally. Networks propagate in various directions. Transition Towns conferences are international events where contacts are made and ideas are developed outside borders. I was, for instance, contacted by one informant who lives in the United States and saw my call for research participation in the GreenSpirit Newsletter which is published on the Internet.

To the best of my knowledge Judaism is not yet officially represented in Britain by grassroots groups active in the Climate Movement, which might be directly proportional to the British religious demographic (Weller ed., 2007: 28). Some Jewish coalitions abroad appear to resemble Christian eco-networks here. For example the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) in the United States is a national network campaigning for Climate Change mitigation that seeks to expand people's knowledge of Jewish values, such as *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tzedek* (justice).

At the end of 2008 an intersecting network quickly gained important focus in my research; the Transition Towns Movement. Both the Climate Movement and Transition Towns started to take shape in Britain in 2005 and within a few years achieved global representation (see Hopkins, 2008: 8-15). The Climate Movement started with the 'Global Day of Climate Action', which has since become an annual event worldwide. In Britain, protest activities and protest camps focused around airport expansion (Heathrow 2007) and the coal mining industry and coal-fired power stations (Drax 2006, Kingsnorth 2008, Merthyr Tydfil 2009). Historically speaking, the Climate Movement may be considered to be the most recent incarnation of the Green Movement, incorporating previous foci (such as Animal Rights, Anti-Nuclear, Road Protests, GM Crops) alongside climate-related concerns, such as the need to reduce carbon emissions and the use of fossil fuels. If the Climate Movement was predicated on protest, the Transition Towns Movement represented its

lifestyle counterpart, focusing on community building as a means of laying the foundations for a zero carbon society.

The Transition Towns Movement is a movement of intentional communities created in order to prepare for the dual challenges of climate instability and peak oil. It is, therefore, situated within the web of networks associated with climate activism. It has a similarly countercultural ethos, being somewhat related to previous movements from the New Age spectrum, such as the Human Potential Movement. Transition Towns could be understood as marking a shift from the emphasis being placed on the individual potential to that of 'community potential'. The association between the Human Potential Movement and Transition Towns is apparent through the alternative spirituality networks that are involved in both movements. Dominique Corrywright (2004) shows that alternative spirituality networks in Britain have important nodal convergences in common geographical locations, such as the Schumacher College in Totnes and influential publications, such as the magazine *Resurgence*. There is ongoing support between Transition Towns and *Resurgence*, with numerous articles profiling the transition initiative (see Goodwin, 2009). The magazine also features articles by the Transition Towns founder, Rob Hopkins (Hopkins, 2009).

After having discovered the existence and participation of Christian and Muslim groups in various climate campaigns through websites and internet blogs, I began to contact them during collective climate events. I met some of my Christian informants in December 2007 and I then met the representatives of the Muslim network the following year, in December 2008. My Christian informants came from different denominations, including Anglican, Catholic, Salvation Army, Quaker, and they almost always remained involved in their own home churches. Most of the Christians in my study belonged to the Christian Ecology Link (CEL), which is a national organisation, but I also interviewed members of the GreenSpirit network and Isaiah 58. Many Christian activists were involved with other networks and movements, such as the Student Christian Movement, Operation Noah, A Rocha and Christian Aid. CEL had been in operation for the past twenty-five years and had over a hundred active members and a much larger readership via its bi-monthly publication, *Green Christian*. Not only were CEL members involved in local Transition initiatives, but also, as an organisation it sought to offer support to the Transition Towns

Network, in the form of a flanking campaign called 'Churches in Transition' (2009) that aimed to introduce other Christians to the Transition Towns Movement.

All the Muslim participants in my study were either second generation immigrants in Britain or converts to Islam. They had some loose links with their local mosques (such as publicising forthcoming ecological events in home mosques) and they had attempted to introduce some environmental literature to other local Islamic centres, yet these actions were not always successful, as their activism and radical ecological approach was regarded with some suspicion by mainstream institutions. They were all members of the London Islamic Network for the Environment (LINE), a network that officially started in 2004 and changed its name in 2010 to Wisdom in Nature (WIN). The network had a smaller number of active members (less than twenty), again with a larger online/web community. They produced a monthly leaflet which was mainly distributed online. Both before and after the name change this network remained committed to creating resources for both Muslims and non-Muslims, in effect introducing Muslims to climate activism and also acquainting climate activists with Islamic eco-theology. The network had a stall at most climate events and they organised numerous green events around London and Brighton, providing discussions, open forums, performances (poetry, music and drama), food sharing and gardening. Both CEL and LINE/WIN wished to function as links between their respective faiths and the Climate and Transition Movements.

The Boundaries of the Field and ANT

My research investigated faith groups involved in the Climate Movement. But what really makes a 'faith' group? What is 'faith' and more specifically, 'faith in what'? I first decided to circumvent this debate (see Fitzgerald, 2000 quoted by Cox, 2004) by employing self-identification or broad emic categories. The groups that collaborate in my research self-identify as 'people of faith' or religious people: Christians, Christian Anarchists or Muslims for instance. However this clarity was short-lived. GreenSpirit is a more quasi-religious group, whose members do not always self-

identify as 'Christians'. Moreover my investigation soon stumbled across a growing network called Transition Towns, which self-identifies as secular, and finds it important to carefully avoid 'contaminative' associations with any particular religious groups.

Yet the crossovers between Transition Towns and the religious groups were numerous: first, members of the religious groups were sometimes involved in their local Transition groups; second, the faith groups cohesively sought to offer support to the Transition Town Network; third, the cross-fertilization of specific interest areas among all these groups (including Transition Towns groups) seemed impossible to neglect.

Hence I would like to state two broad data collection methods for my present research. First I do not wish to claim that the subject matter is entirely pertinent to Religious Studies, but instead, I call upon Religious Studies as a place of confluence for anthropology, ethnography, psychology, history, postmodernism and so on (Chryssides and Geaves, 2007: 39) to facilitate its valuable tools, texts and insights in this particular exploration. There is little point in trying to fit the whole research subject tightly into Procrustes' bed, chopping the subject matter here and there so that all stays relevant. This would significantly censor the data I collected according to pre-existing taxonomies and miss the ecology of the whole field. For instance at first glance, since I am looking at people of faith or faith networks, I should stop in the Transition Towns' doorway, and identify it as the edge of my context: 'transitioners' (see Glossary) do not collectively identify themselves as people of faith or religious people. Instead I therefore propose to make this into a sort of open door ethnography, an ethnography that keeps the context open and sets its sails beyond the 'intra-religious horizon' (Sutcliffe, 2006: 296).

Ethnographic or field studies are often defined as *in situ* studies, in depth studies of particular contexts (Baszanger & Dodier, 2004:12). Although internally they are explored in an open manner, these contexts might be preliminarily defined. An ethnographic study of asylums will, for instance, have a recognisable edge of its context, the asylum's gate and fence. However, in the present project, I did not wish to limit the context or decide what was relevant.

I was inspired by Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) as a model for data collection. Although ANT has gained a lot of popularity during the past two decades and it represents the base of a paradigm shift in sociology, its application in research is problematic. In the first instance ANT seems to obscure the subject to be studied rather than clarify it. Latour illustrates this in his *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, through an imaginary dialogue with a frustrated PhD student. The PhD student wanting to apply ANT is left to write about the actor-network, having been deprived of all the 'safe' tools and frameworks in social research (see Latour, 2005:141-156):

Student: So what can it [ANT] do for me?

Professor: The best it can do for you is to say something like, 'When your informants mix up in organisation, hardware, psychology and politics in one sentence, don't break it down first into neat little pots, try to follow the link they make among these elements that would have looked completely incommensurable if you had followed normal procedures. That's all.

ANT can't tell you positively what the link is' (Latour, 2005: 141-142).

In his *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (1987) Latour's proposed method of understanding science is to follow scientists at work, and also follow them through their controversies, looking at how they impact and are in turn impacted by others, and slowly unravelling the constructions that emerge from these encounters (1987:15). He does not start with the double helix but with the series of people, events, machines that have collectively contributed to these final products. Here Bruno Latour's first principle is that: 'The construction of facts and machines is a collective process' (1987:29), and it seems convenient to separate the two and useful to identify the actors in their networks.

The scientist studying this amorphous setting has only one main tool, which is describing what the actors are doing: 'describe, write, describe, write' (Latour, 2005: 149). This follows after a careful and chronological recording of everything that goes on. The researcher keeps track of all his or her moves, as 'everything is data' (Latour, 2005: 133). The scientist takes the data through many different frames of reference and this re-framing is in fact how he traces and describes the

associations in the field. In ANT, the scientist is continuously tracing the links between different frames of reference rather than finding one 'stable' frame of reference (Latour, 2005:24).

Latour proposes that 'scientists of associations', those committed to using ANT, must take stock of and examine five 'uncertainty principles': (1) 'the nature of groups' being studied as identity is a conflicting and disputed process; (2) 'the nature of actions' since agency is shared and influenced by other actors; (3) 'the nature of objects' since 'the type of agencies participating in the interaction seems to remain wide open'; (4) 'the nature of facts' that are assumed by the social/natural scientist; and, finally, (5) 'the type of studies' that are undertaken and to what degree these can be said to be 'empirical' (Latour, 2005: 22).

When looking at the nature of groups, Latour contends that a group is defined by a list of 'anti-groups' and he suggests that the researcher must start by identifying these anti-groups (Latour, 2005:33). The anti-groups compete against the group and threaten to dissolve it and thus groups have to 'renew their existence' (Latour, 2005: 37) to be able to delineate themselves against others. Importantly the group delineation not only results from the actions of the actors themselves but also from those of the social scientist or researcher who validates its existence by studying it. Hence to examine the Christian and Islamic networks, I am going to start by looking at the groups or networks against which they are defined; the other 'anti-groups' in the Climate Movement.

Finally two separate practices/events will be explored in future chapters as case studies: 'The Work That Reconnects' (Chapter 7) and 'Fast for the Planet' (Chapter 9). Arguably this may not be the best phrase because in general terms (see Flyvbjerg, 2011; Thomas, 2011; Baxter & Jack, 2008),

Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame — an object — within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates (Thomas, 2011: 511).

From an ANT point of view we cannot really distinguish the case study from the rest of the study. Latour maintains everything is equally important, there is no one framework to be achieved, the social territory is flat, and data must be shuffled and re-shuffled as it is viewed through different frames. In my research all the events I took part in were 'case studies'. However I cannot present them all here. I will therefore present here under the title of case study, a few events that stood out as representative or particularly concentrated in the type of processes that would otherwise take a longer time to unravel, and thus made particularly good examples. This is an effective way of holding a magnifying glass over the field, giving the reader an extended account that can serve as context for the more minute analysis or simply showing the reader what exactly went on during a given day.

From the point of view of what is finally achieved, ANT seems to be nothing more than ethnography or just qualitative inquiry. ANT's insistence on rich description is very similar to the aims and methods of phenomenology (Smart, 1973:21 quoted in Flood, 1999: 98), yet Latour explains that the gap between ANT and phenomenology remains 'too wide because of the excessive stress given by phenomenologists to the human sources of agency' (Latour, 2005: 61). ANT takes the view that agency is shared by all human and non-human participants in the network. Latour does not want objects to be separated away by their respective inclusion in a fabric called 'the material culture' any more than humans should only belong to the 'social domain' (Latour, 2005: 84). My next chapter, on theoretical models will explore this in more depth by looking specifically at the relevance of place, as an inanimate participant, in ritual, a 'social' practice.

To conclude, I surmise that studying the networks in the Climate Movement will not only provide context but will also actively define the faith groups I proposed to investigate. But where does the Climate Movement end? Where do the networks in this field end? The answer seems to be: 'on which day?' Every day the networks are changed by new associations. The edges of the field, the boundaries of the networks under study, will be, ultimately, subjectively determined by the researcher's involvement in the network at the time of their research. The 'following around' is admittedly a subjective process, we cannot be everywhere at all times. In the case of concomitant events I chose the one that appeared to me to carry more significance for my research. The

researcher can hardly remain a *tabula rasa* until the data collection process is completed (Ezzy, 2002: 10) and only then begin interpretation. Although I can confidently say that I started my research with no real expectations of what I might find, during data collection I have developed informal hypotheses that were either verified or falsified, but which in many ways directed my choices in fieldwork. Yet, to prevent interpretation for the sake of an unbiased data collection (which can only then be systematically followed by theory grounding analysis) would deprive the researcher of his/her abductive reasoning and would impede the organic growth of the research project.

It was difficult to stop collecting my data and to disengage from the field. I stopped quite naturally in the end, once I arrived at a comfortable place in my understanding of the research field. After 2010, I took part in events without the pressure of recording everything or doing research for the present project. It can be said that my leaving of the field is also ‘a boundary’ of the field and my detachment from it puts an end to ‘the field’, not only as far as my thesis is concerned but also from the point of view of ‘the field’ I, the researcher, have witnessed.

Data Collection and Interpretation

Qualitative Research Methods

My aim was to research faith groups who were active in the Climate Movement. Given the scarcity of secondary literature on this subject I wanted to collect empirical data about their participation, organisation, practices, beliefs and wider inclusion in the movement. I looked at different ways in which this research could be carried out and decided that, for the purpose of this study, qualitative research represented the most suitable method of enquiry. As my research progressed I also made use of questionnaires and so I employed a mixed methodology.

Although I was familiar with the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative research and had some practice with a small number of interviews carried out during the MA in Contemporary

Religions and Spiritualities I completed in 2006, I felt largely inexperienced. I simply tried to learn as much as possible. I kept a diary of my experiences, carried out interviews, participated and observed during worship, workshops, meetings, conferences, retreats and so on. My main approach to data collection was based on finding out as much as I could, following different leads as they organically presented themselves and seeking to deepen my understanding of the whole web of relations in this project.

Qualitative research, in its multitude of forms, is often defined by establishing a dichotomy with quantitative research (Silverman, 2001: 25), employed for studies that rely on statistical, quantifiable data. Despite this opposition, the two methods - qualitative and quantitative - do not exclude each other and can be used together, depending on the intentions of the research (Bryman, 1988:126). Hence, at a later stage of my research I conducted a short survey at two Climate Camps, in England and Wales, to triangulate my qualitative data. Given the exploratory nature of my research I opted for a predominantly qualitative approach, since this allowed for an examination of the informants' own interpretation (ibid, 94).

Over the last few decades qualitative research (having its roots in early ethnography) has consolidated a terminology and a code of praxis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:4). Most commonly the researcher gathers data by in-depth interviewing, participant observation, conversation, video and audio recordings (Holloway, 1997:43-45). The researcher is often immersed in the field he or she is studying, becomes part of the study, by being reflexive, by accepting that 'knowledge involves the knower/the finder (who is human) and therefore subjective' (Hufford, 1995: 57). Instead of practising a utopian objectivity, a 'view from nowhere', the researcher integrates his/ her personal views in the research (ibid., 60).

Coming to this field with no prior experience or knowledge of it, I could not assume the insider/ emic perspective (see Harris, 1976). I hoped that an open, exploratory enquiry was going to provide me with data that would lend itself to what Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser developed as Grounded Theory,

[the] theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another. A researcher does not begin a project with the preconceived theory in mind... [but] allows the theory to emerge from the data' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 9-12).

Given the diversity of my research subject, participant observation and semi-structured interviewing were the least restrictive modes of gathering data. Participant observation became popularised as a research method in cultural anthropology, particularly at the beginning of the 20th century. Some of the anthropologists who made participant observation popular, such as Bronisław Malinowski (1922) and Margaret Mead (1928), also left behind great debates and controversies surrounding their perceived understanding of the 'natives' in their studies. Malinowski claimed that through participant observation it is possible to 'grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world' [emphasis in original] (Malinowski, 1922: 25, cited in Zahle, 2012: 55). To grasp the native's point of view, the researcher undertakes a sort of mirroring activity where, by doing what the native does, one may hope to feel, think and ultimately understand the native.

Putting aside its oxymoronic connotation (since 'participation' and 'observation' may seem antonymic to some), participant observation presupposes a somewhat passive interaction from the researcher. The researcher is not expected to 'intervene' in what the other real participants are doing, or if he or she must intervene, they should do this 'as little as possible' (Zahle, 2012: 54).

'The researcher *acts* as a member of the community and collects information *acting* as if he/she were from the same cultural group...' [my emphasis] (Bhanu, 2009: 77).

The problem here is of course one of social construction. If the researcher 'acts' like a 'participant observer', so can the participant 'act' like a participant. After all, this is what the researcher-observer expects him or her to do and so does everyone else. Or they may rebel and stop acting as they are expected to. For example, when I joined three of my GreenSpirit informants at a Sunday mass, one of them whispered to me, after looking around the room, that she felt like 'an

anthropologist'. We were sitting in the pews, facing the priest. The priest had seen me taking notes and had given me a disapproving glance. I thought that she wished to demarcate herself from the rest of the congregation and come around to my side, on the 'outside'. I believe that she felt 'like an anthropologist' because she was an academic and my presence reminded her of her other persona, in her work life. Or it may simply be a case of 'I like you/ know you better than everyone else in this room, today' or 'I am sorry the priest looked at you disapprovingly just now, I am on your side just so you know'.

I wrote about this occurrence in my diary and realised that my informant first became uneasy when she saw me taking notes in the church. Admittedly this had been bad practice on my side, this should have been an opportunity for me to participate rather than observe. My informant did not wish to be studied by me, because before our arrival at the church we had simply 'talked' during the car journey and we had formed a bond based on our 'academic' backgrounds. Thus, although participant observation can be problematic, the researcher can use his or her reflexivity to understand both the participants' position and his or her own conceptualisation of the field. This reflexivity is in turn a tool of research in itself, because the researcher's comprehension of 'the field' affects 'data collection and the evolution of interpersonal responsibilities in the field' (Sheehan, 2011: 336).

Semi-structured interviews have a basic configuration, as the researcher concentrates on certain aspects of his/her research, but the interviewees are still given the possibility of making their independent contributions (Holloway, 1997: 94-95). I participated in a large number of events (see Appendix 2 for a list of the climate events I attended), their duration ranging from a day to over a week during climate protest camps. I conducted a total of 38 in depth interviews (see Appendix 3) (excluding a number of follow up interviews/questions when certain ideas needed further clarification). Interviews were hosted in different locations, often during or after events or at protest camps. A few interviews were carried out on the telephone and in some cases I travelled to the informants' place of residence and interviewed them in their own home or preferred place of meeting

I interviewed Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Druids, Pagans as well as religiously unaffiliated activists. I also administered two surveys (N= 78) at two Climate Camps in London and Wales. This was a non-random, self-selected, sample, as the surveys were made available in key areas around the protest camps, such as the welcoming tent, the communal kitchen and main meeting tent. Participants in the survey were instructed to fill in the survey and contact details and place the survey in the sealed collection boxes which were also placed in these areas.

Geographically, I criss-crossed the country, moving from London to Nottingham, from Plymouth to Lancaster, from Cardiff to Totnes, from Bristol to Kent and from Suffolk to Milton Keynes. This was due to the necessity of following events as they unfolded at different places. I also thought that one regional monographic account would be partial, and that I needed to acquire a number of diverse ethnographies to ensure triangulation. As it turns out, in the new light of Latour's Actor-Network-Theory, I was simply following around. In addition to this empirical data, I also made use of the various media (leaflets, magazines, recordings) published by faith groups and climate activists from many other, intersecting, networks.

An Indian parable cautions that if one wants to find water it is better to dig one single sixty yard hole rather than six different ten yard holes (Braud & Anderson, 1998:35). I initially feared that I had overlooked this wisdom as I had begun looking at four distinct networks, as well as the 'anti-groups'. Yet it seemed to me that it was going to be beneficial to first approach this comparatively and contextually before being able to offer a more focused, in-depth monograph. However, later, I found that these groups were interconnected in many ways and it was almost imperative to look at the juxtapositions and conjunctions between them. For example there are some cases of dual membership (GreenSpirit and CEL), or various common events, such as a three day eco-retreat in April 2009, with participants from both London Islamic Network for the Environment/ Wisdom in Nature and the Christian Ecology Link.

In the interpretation of my data I was mostly influenced by discourse analysis. Being aware that discourse analysis is not one method but a very broad spectrum, I initially introduce it here under a minimal definition; as analysis of verbal and non-verbal accounts. Although discourse was primarily understood to refer to language, for some analysts (Fairclough, 1993; Harré, 1995) discourse is not restricted to language but includes ‘visual images and non-verbal movements’ (in Wood & Kroger, 2000: 19). My intention here is not to argue that actions can be seen as discourse, but to maintain that, in making use of similar tools or techniques for analysis, verbal and non-verbal accounts can be interpreted alongside each other, in search for complementarity as well as contrast.

An important building unit for discourse analysis is John L. Austin’s postulation of the ‘illocutionary act’ (Austin, 2005 [1962]), later redefined by John Searle as a ‘speech act’ (Searle, 2004 [1969]). Illocutionary acts or speech acts are performative utterances, or utterances that not only declare something but also ‘do’ something, such as: ‘Give me your money!’ Although initially a linguistic enterprise related to the development of transformational grammar (Harris, 1991), discourse analysis was mainly popularised by Michael Foucault’s ‘The Archaeology of Knowledge’ (1972) and ‘The Order of Discourse’, his inaugural lecture at Collège de France in December 1970 (see Foucault, 1971). Foucault’s approach to discourse made discourse analysis into a multi-disciplinary tool of analysis, and not one solely the reserve of linguists.

Foucault was not necessarily preoccupied with speech acts but with énoncés, statements and their interconnectedness. Foucault (1972) understood discourse: ‘sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements’ (1972:80 cited in Mills, 2003: 6). Discourse is in this sense capable of self-propagation through its inherent rules. Hence Adam Jaworski & Nicholas Coupland ([1999] 2006) contend that discourse is more than just ‘language in use’, but ‘language use relative to social, political and cultural formations – it is language reflecting social order but also language shaping social order, and shaping individuals’ interaction with society’ (2006:3). Therefore the process of analysing discourse is not only linguistic analysis

but ‘interdiscursive analysis - seeing text in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together’ (Fairclough, 2003:3).

I assume that discourse analysis is inextricably bound to a critical stance, even when this is not overtly expressed, as, for instance, in the case of ‘critical discourse analysis’ (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Discourse analysts are often concerned with unmasking power relations and ideologies, such as for example Edward Said’s postcolonial critique *Orientalism* (1994). Discourse analysts deconstruct text with the intention of exposing inequalities contained and perpetuated by language (Jaworski & Coupland, 2006: 473-9). Whether this perspective is predominantly Marxist (Wood & Kroger, 2000: 21) or Feminist, Psycho-analytical, Eco-critical and so on, it cannot be circumvented, as analysis is entirely dependent on a socio-historical, geographic, political, demographic viewpoint. Within these various traditions, I was most influenced by Norman Fairclough’s approach to discourse analysis as a way of studying social change (Fairclough, 1992), performance approaches to discourse (Goffman, 1967, 1981) as well as eco-linguistic methods that aim to identify ways in which ecological problems are represented in text (Coupland & Coupland, 1997). Ultimately these distinct methods of discourse analysis can only provide a set of guidelines, and the analysis that will be offered here is tailored to the specific subject. As analysts recommend: ‘we should aim not only to use discourse analysis, but to do discourse analysis’ (Schegloff 1999 cited by Wood and Kroger, 2000: 26).

Discourse analysts claim that our contemporary society is a reflective society or a discourse-aware society. Anthony Giddens (1991) claims that in late modernity ‘expert systems’ (such as the social sciences) are systematically integrated into reflexive processes. In Chapter 3 I will look more closely at means through which dominating discourses (global forms or shared standards) become adopted by new networks and how reflective practices generate new knowledge.

It is on the basis of such understandings of how discourse works within social practices that people can come to question and look beyond existing discourses, or existing relations of dominance and marginalisation between discourses, and so advance knowledge (Fairclough, 2006: 149).

Eco-critics are first and foremost discourse analysts. Eco-critics often point out the inequalities contained and perpetuated by language (see Macnaughton and Urry, 1998). Discourse analysis means simply taking the time to arrive at the root of a communication practice or particular information, so that the reader can be given the opportunity to observe the bias it carries with it.

My criticism of DA is that it still carries over a more limiting strand of positivism in its behaviourist-like approach. Although discourse is not just a mere reflection of the phenomena under study, nor should it become the only source of research, or the sole subject matter (see Wood & Kroger, 2000:10). It would be insufficient to cut and paste all worship occasions under the banner of ritual for instance. All these occasions depend on their preparation and the variety of experiences the group (and individuals within it) had the previous day, and so on, being therefore part of a greater dynamic and bigger picture. This is where Actor-Network-Theory can step in and fulfil an important function, since ANT goes beyond language and the human realm, it can perhaps bridge the gaps that DA fails to address and hence these two apparently conflicting approaches can complement each other.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the interview process all informants were made aware of the nature of my research, which was carried out in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act and the research guidelines at the Open University. Moreover all informants were granted anonymity and asked to sign a release form (Appendix 9). I always made organisers aware of my own participation as a researcher in the case of demonstrations or performances in public places and asked for consent to take pictures or audio-record proceedings.

My research was dialogic, meaning that I collaborated with my informants and did not only assume an interviewer's role, but provided them in return with information about my research (see Harvey, 2003). During my ten days at the Kingsnorth Climate Camp I had to fully participate in

the life of the group and the bigger camp. The whole settlement appeared at times like a resistance camp, with some protesters being arrested every day and a police helicopter beam searching overhead at night. People made relationships with ease in this purposely built 'communitas' setting. Some of my informants had an academic background and were interested in the ins and outs of my research. Therefore I had the opportunity to interview informants and I was often, in turn, 'interviewed' by them. In many cases the interviews finished up as chatting over cups of tea in the common kitchen, as we built rocket stoves (see Glossary) or cooked. Generally people did not just want to talk about their opinions, they wished to know mine too, and I felt it would be disrespectful not to accept the dialogue. Although I initially feared that according to interview ethics this might be considered bad practice, I had faith in my contributors, whose opinions had often been forged during decades of political activism, and I felt certain that they knew their own minds well enough not to allow me to lead them into saying anything they did not mean.

Alongside using surveys to triangulate qualitative data, I collected other quantitative data, often in an ad hoc manner. For example, during the Christian Ecology Link retreat in 2009 all forty participants were asked to write one or two words on the subject of 'community' and 'environmentalism'. At the end of the sessions I asked for permission to collect the 'post it' notes and all participants agreed (gladly I hope). In this case the anonymous contributions have the advantage of not having been intended for formal research and therefore might be able to claim a higher margin of 'authenticity'.

One permanent grey area for me was the edge between being honest and ethical without being rude or intrusive. I do find comfort in other researchers' accounts, according to whom: '[d]espite a commitment to conducting research overtly, deception is, nonetheless, inherent in participant observation' (Shaffir: 1991:77, cited by Sutcliffe 2003: 18). First, from an ethical viewpoint, my presence as a researcher was not always known to all. Especially with larger groups or dynamic open groups, where apart from the core members many new others join and leave at different times, it would be impossible to announce my presence and ask for consent with every new arrival without disturbing the proceedings. I would be introduced at the beginning and often asked to say a bit about myself. Due to my own religious laxness I imagined I would be

comfortable doing most things: praying, singing, dancing and so on. I also imagined that my involvement would have some sort of consistency but instead, I ended up giving uneven, disproportionate responses during participation; like taking communion on more than one occasion whilst withdrawing from choir-singing in another instance, as I felt that by taking part I was also (unwillingly) subscribing to some of the beliefs thus expressed.

Personal Background and the Insider/ Outsider Polarity

I was born in Constanta, Romania, immigrated to Britain in 2000 and have been living here ever since, first in Greater London, and for the past eight years in Bath, where I studied for my MA in Contemporary Religions. My personal historic outlook is (loosely) divided into three stages: Communist Romania until the 1989 revolution, post-revolutionary Romania until the millennium, and for the past twelve years living in Britain.

My first contact with Religious Studies as an academic discipline was through my MA at Bath Spa University. I had previously completed a BA in Letters and Theology at Ovidius University in Romania, which I started in 1995. I cannot claim a specific religious identity, although during the past two years I have practised a spiritual programme. Neither can I claim a firm political stance. Political activism is (or rather, used to be, prior to this research project) truly foreign to me. Although Romanians have been politically active since the 1989 revolution, I grew up during a totalitarian communist regime, when even political whispers could get one in trouble.

The postmodern researcher/theorist is often required to be 'fully transparent about who the storyteller is and how the teller came to know and present the story' (Daly, 1997: 360). For the post-modern scholar a detached, value-free, analysis, through the disenchanted lens of modernity, is no longer preferable or indeed possible (see Tremlett, 2009). Thus I attempted to recognise my own ethnocentric filters and to indicate to the reader where I come from; ideologically, historically, geographically and so on. When situating myself inside my research I noted that I experienced times of 'insiderness' during various activities, mostly during drumming and dancing in protest marches, but also during group discussions on various topics. On one occasion I wrote in my diary:

‘we were drumming and chanting in crescendo...’, which might qualify as an example of entrainment as I had never learned how to drum or ever had the opportunity to practise it. Was I a protester/ an insider? Although I believe that Climate Change mitigation at a state level is unsatisfactory and I am therefore supportive of the Climate Movement, I do not see myself sufficiently committed to assume an activist role, at least most of the time. I do not have a religious identity or a special empathy with any particular religious groups, any more than anybody else. Yet I do strive for an insider understanding just as I, as I imagine most people do, strive to have a profound understanding of the other person in most encounters.

I therefore accept my outsider status, or put more fluidly, I acknowledge gravitating towards the outsider end of the spectrum (Waterhouse, 2002). Also, I believe that I do not need to maintain, or indeed that I can maintain, a certain fixed status – outsider/insider – throughout my research. I speculate that the progressive levels of insiderness and outsidership are dynamically fluctuating and inter-changeable. This could accord with Steven Sutcliffe’s understanding of emics and etics, by which ‘[these] are not a fixed dichotomy of representation but dynamic and symbiotic frames of discourse: emics can transform into etics and back again’ (Sutcliffe, 2003:16). Sutcliffe goes on to propose making ‘the epistemic shift’ conscious and transparent, and in a way allowing for etic discourse to be emic-ally testable and potentially discredited. In this way scholarly understanding of a particular phenomenon needs ultimately to stand the test of emic accounts and might potentially be proved to be fake. (ibid.)

Although this might not be relevant or applicable in all cases, in highly polythetic (Needham, 1975) and heterogeneous groups, such as the ones I have been researching, the insider status is, in some cases, provisional and multi-layered, fitting with ephemeral settlements (Bowman, 2009) and with stratified or ramified identities: protester – Christian – vegan, for example. In this context, the emic-etic dichotomy could be further relativised. As for myself as an academic researcher, I remain ultimately committed to an outsider’s view, as my conclusions may depart significantly from the self-understandings of the activists who participated in this study.

Conclusion

My multi-sited ethnographic research was carried out using a mixed methodology. My primary data consists of: participant observation field notes from almost forty events and thirty-eight semi-structured interviews. I also administered two surveys, at two Climate Camps for which I had 78 respondents. Apart from the empirical data, I also make use of the literature published by three of the four faith groups, and other networks inside the Climate and Transition Towns Movements. I was mainly influenced by ANT in my approach to data collection and discourse analysis in the process of data analysis. I argued for the researcher accepting the ethical challenge of the research project as a constant test and thus remaining transparent in this process whilst having the freedom to experiment with new attitudes and re-think assumptions. In the next chapter I will develop my theoretical models to assist me with the interpretation of my data.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL MODELS

In this chapter I develop three theoretical models for the analysis of my data: (1) a model on dynamic countercultural networks, their expansion and organising processes; (2) a model based on relational identity theory and the socio-cognitive model of transference that links identity changes with the affective re-engagement that accompanies cognitive and behavioural processes; and (3) a model of ecological ritual as a means of relating to the planet.

Network Model

As I showed in Chapter 1, Manuel Castells posits that social change is based on network based struggles and that through such struggles networks can expand by reprogramming opposite networks from the outside (Castells, 2005: 695). The Climate Movement would be encountering opposing networks (networks that may have mainstream or opposing technocentric values and goals) as well as compatible networks. In both cases the process that enables their incorporation into the movement can be in the first instance one of ‘frame alignment’ (Snow *et al.*, 1986). In the context of social movements’ theory, framing is the process in which activists align their own understanding or ‘interpretative orientation’ to the larger public. By ‘interpretative orientations’, David Snow and his collaborators mean ‘some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and social movement organisations’ activities, goals and ideology’ (Snow *et al.*, 1986: 464).

The concept of ‘frame’ is based on Ervin Goffman’s (1974) *Frame Analysis*, and it represents a ‘schemata of interpretation’, a mental model that provides compartments for new information; a frame is not only a viewpoint on a present issue, but enables future information to be classified according to an existing model. Frame alignment can take place by: frame bridging, frame amplification and frame extension (Snow *et al.*, 1986: 468-472). It is in essence a process of calibration, where activists have to make their own standpoint fit in with those outside the

movement and convince them that their values are compatible or congruent with the ones held by the movement.

I propose an 'attractor' model to study the networks in my field of research. I use the term 'attractor' here to represent two particular qualities of the assemblages I am looking at: the first is the driving force and power to provoke a confluence or orientate all these distinct networks around the same banner of Climate Change. A good allegory may be that of a cyclone or hurricane or another such dissipative system that needs a central pull or force of convergence. The second property of these assemblages that can justify the use of this term rests in its implied teleology – to attract towards a certain purpose or end. In physics an attractor represents a set of physical properties toward which a system tends to advance, regardless of the starting conditions of the system (see Ruelle, 1981; Milnor, 1985).

I hypothesise that (1) the networks in my study are countercultural networks that are integral to the dynamic reformulation Castells sees at the very basis of wider social change. Further I propose that (2) these networks have separate or individual attractors, which can be Climate Change, Peak Oil, the financial crisis, poverty and so on, coupled with common global aims and make use of global forms, and that this universalism gives their network power and the ability to propagate. When networks have more than one 'attractor', they have more opportunities to frame their grievances and attract diverse audiences. Finally I propose that (3) networks use framing as a main mechanism for their growth and expansion and that spatial convergences in the web help ground the networks or stabilise their identity, acting as compensators for the deterritorializing processes in these networks.

The term attractor is suitable for describing the central focus of a dynamic system or assemblage, where all networks can converge, despite their other foci, like for example social justice, animal rights, creation care, etc. By emphasising the attractor rather than the 'movement' in its 'entirety' we can get away from the organismic metaphor. The attractor represents a temporary and ephemeral pull or confluence. From this centre it can organise and operate as a more complex form of organisation for its constituent networks. This is not an organism and its existence as a

‘movement’ is temporary, ephemeral and conditioned by the maintenance of the operative links between the nodes that form it.

Some of the individuals involved in the Climate Movement would have come from other movements, such as the Peace Movement (as my data will further show). In 2011 and 2012 Climate activists in the UK have been supportive and involved in the Occupy Movement, which had protest camps across the country. Although the Occupy Movement has the financial crisis as its fundamental attractor, it intersects the Climate Movement through values and goals, as well as global forms, such as consensus decision making – as a reflective practice and an alternative to democratic voting.

The Occupy Movement territorialises a certain experience of dissent, challenging urban spaces to ‘refract’ ‘the moral fractures of global society and the city’, as Paul-François Tremlett proposes in his article ‘Occupied Territory at the Interstices of the Sacred: Between Capital and Community’ (Tremlett, 2012). Tremlett uses the concept of ‘place-frame’ (Martin, 2003 quoted by Tremlett, 2012: 131) showing that:

‘The Occupy London experiment was an attempt to work an alternative imaginary of community. I conceptualize this imaginary as a ‘place-frame’. [...] Place-frames [...] have a diagnostic or critical function combining empirical and normative claims. They constitute powerful discourses about practices of relatedness and connection and can articulate together and mobilize a political claim on a space. The place-frame that was constitutive of the Occupy London camp was conceived around the sense that the camp would be a place in which the moral fractures of (global) society and the city, as they were allegedly refracted through the site of occupation, could be addressed.’

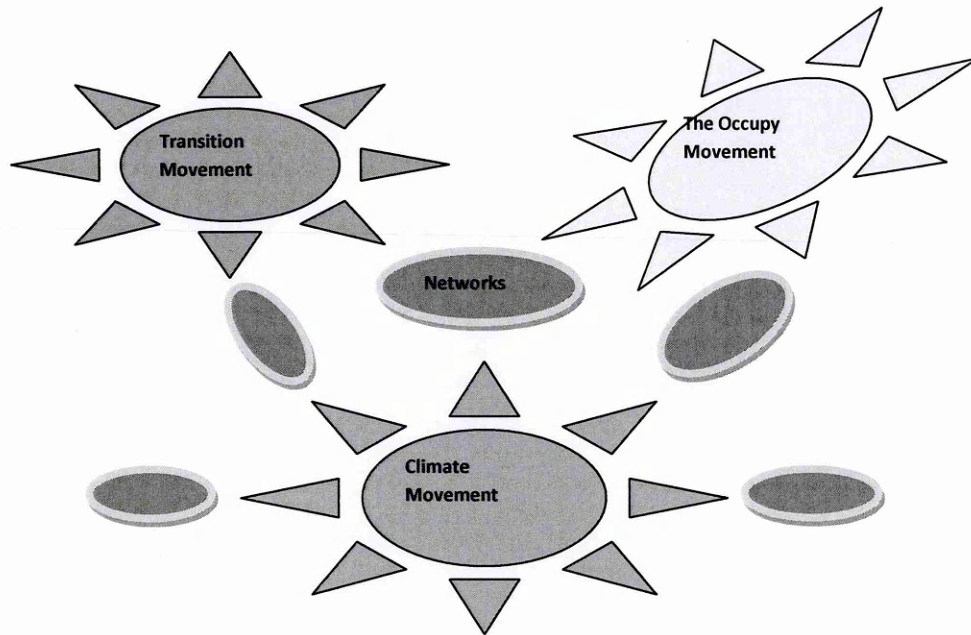
Therefore, as Tremlett contends, these movements may be understood to attempt to produce an embodied normative or moral re-organisation by re-claiming territory and experimenting with urban spaces (Tremlett, 2012). The Climate Movement, The Transition Towns Movement, The Occupy Movement may be understood in one sense as movements that react to globalisation, or as counter-globalisation movements, paradoxically they also have global aims and they make use of global forms, such as social expertise for example. Such movements may be

connected through their countercultural aims and be part of ‘a new mass anti-systemic movement’, which attempts to challenge existing global systems ‘from below’ and provoke ‘an alternative democratic globalisation’ (see Fotopoulos, 2001).

DeLanda (2005) makes a correlation between territory and identity – since he contends that processes of territorialisation stabilise the identity of the assemblage. It could be inferred that the Climate Movement is often subjected to processes of deterritorialisation, since most of the communication and organisation takes place online or through communication technology. In view of this we may ask how does it solidify its identity? It seems likely that the nodal – spatial convergences in the web of relations help ground the movement and give it some territorial ‘reassurance’, particularly during Climate Camp or other extended events. As imaginary communities (see Tremlett, 2012) these spaces can explore the key values contained by the attractors, and thus the attractors can really become active on the ground and exercise their pulling power towards the unengaged public.

Attractors can pull in new networks or individuals through a process of translation or by super-imposing their own main attractor onto the existing one; Climate can thus float towards Occupy. In fig. 2 the diagram explains the attractor model by emphasising that the movements do not contain the networks, as the organismic metaphor would have it, but they share the networks with other movements/ attractors and are bound by relations of exteriority. Actor-Network-Theory pays special attention to the actions and relations that take place before the new assemblage is formed. What was the Climate Movement before it became the Climate Movement? The Climate and Transition Movements could perhaps be seen as a new corroboration of alternative spirituality, through their lineage.

Fig. 2 Diagram for the attractor model.



There are undoubtedly roots or relatives in such organizations as the Findhorn Foundation, the Human Potential Movement, the New Age Movement and the Neo-Pagan Movement. These quite clearly share a common ethos thorough their opposition to consumerism, their support of bioregionalism and local economy, their emphasis on community and interpersonal relationships and most importantly the ecological nucleus (see Harvey, [1997] 2007, Sutcliffe & Bowman eds., 2000; York, 1995).

Another shared characteristic with the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements is the network structure, the horizontal or circular organization as opposed to a hierarchical one (see also York, 1995: 327-9), the lack of (acknowledged) leadership and the types and modes of linkages that are formed. Julian Holloway (2000) uses Actor-Network Theory to investigate the New Age Movement , focusing on the way it creates its 'institutional geographies', which unlike the classic institutions of the social realm (or at least the way in which institutions are generally thought to function), these represent 'processes [rather than permanent fixtures] that require constant effort and upkeep' (Holloway, 2000: 553). The institutional geographies are created through what the

Actor-Network Theory knows as ‘translating’ (Callon, 1991: 143 quoted in Holloway, 2000: 557), which is a process of disseminating information whilst re-shaping it to attract new audiences. As discussed above, in social movements’ theory, this process of translation is conceptualised as ‘framing’.

In the context of my own research, it can be argued that given the plasticity of the subject (Hulme, 2009) Climate Change can be framed in a multitude of ways: as a social justice issue, as an environmental issue, as an issue of personal health and wellbeing, as an economic problem, etc. For instance, when framed as a social justice issue – ‘Climate justice for the poorest’ (a slogan used by Christian Aid) – Climate Change can be more easily assimilated in the sphere of poverty and justice concerns. The Transition Towns Movement has both Climate and Peak Oil as attractors, thus being able to switch frames according to the audience to which the frame is extended.

In considering a network model for the countercultural networks in my study, I draw on two existing network models: Michael York’s SPIN model (York, 1995) and Dominic Corrywright’s Web model (Corrywright, 2003). SPIN, which stands for Segmented Polycentric Integrated Network, was itself drawn from the study of movements for personal and social change (see Gerlach & Hine, 1968). These movements are not necessarily religious, but can have various other emphases: politics, gender, race (see Hine, 1977). The name describes the type of network it refers to: segmented or reticulated, polycentric or polycephalous. The name refers to its horizontal structure where leaders/heads are absent (acephalous) or many (polycephalous). Discussing SPIN in reference to the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements, Michael York finds it to be ‘the most accurate sociological construct applicable to the New Age’ (1995: 325) and describes five main types of linkages within such networks (based on Gerlach & Hine, 1968, quoted in York, 1995: 326):

(1) ties of friendship, kinships, social relationships or personal association; all of which can support the structure with members going from one group to another and hence forming links between all groups;

- (2) inter-cell leadership exchange, social ties among leaders and others in autonomous cells;
- (3) travelling evangelists, spokespeople, eco-evangelists, etc;
- (4) large scale demonstrations and 'in-gatherings', such as annual events (conferences, festivals, etc);
- (5) publications, newsletters, the World Wide Web, books, word of mouth and other means of disseminating basic themes and beliefs.

Paraphrasing Marylyn Ferguson's (1987) concept of the Aquarian Conspiracy as a 'network of networks', Michael York proposes that 'the holistic movement' is such 'a SPIN of SPINs', that includes New Age, Neo-Paganism, the ecology movement, feminism, the Goddess movement, the Human Potential Movement, Eastern mysticism groups, liberal/liberation politics, the Aquarian conspiracy, etc.' (York, 1995: 330). I understand the Climate Movement to aggregate similarly, by accumulating supporting networks and organisations and, as ANT suggests, by creating or re-creating these networks.

Dominic Corrywright's (2003, 2004) web model emphasises the importance of place in the study of networks. Corrywright posits that 'place, people, and practices interconnect to create nodal systems' or webs (2004:315). By incorporating place in the structure of networks we can achieve a more ecological approach to networks. Places bring networks together; the Schumacher College in Devon, near Totnes, is such a nodal point in the alternative spiritualities web (see Corrywright, 2004). It seems less important to identify the edges of the field than it is to locate these central hubs objectively in one's field of research, along with what Corrywright refers to as 'the central web maker', the main actant or actants who 'spin' and connect the nodal points of the web. From an ANT perspective, the collectives that are assembled together in a network are not exclusively human, as non-human participants can also have agency and participate in the unfolding of events that lead to a certain end result or structure (Latour, 1987:15; 29).

The web model is organic in the sense that it reflects the mobility – physical, theoretical, and historical – of places, people and practices growing and changing (Corrywright, 2004: 315).

Using Dominic Corrywright's web model we can more clearly identify the central nodes on this web of networks. The fact that this movement is made up by networks from both self-declared secular (Green Party, Communist Party) and religious quarters suggests this is a hybrid secular-religious web. Unlike the holistic movement, the Climate Movement is not necessarily made up by networks that can easily coexist with each other, the anarchist protesters from Climate Camps and the Green Christian and Muslims do not share as much of a common ground as for example New Agers and Neo Pagans or other spiritual seekers. Yet the Climate Movement can more readily rely on its physical nodes, as it can physically bring together its networks to annual collective events, such as the Global Day of Action in London, national and regional Climate Camps, protest marches at such key locations as Heathrow, the Drax power station in North Yorkshire, the Kingsnorth power station in Kent. Moreover the Internet offers an opportunity for minimal maintenance through its virtual archive of relationships that can be easily resurrected through social networking sites.

Apart from the emphasis on place, I also draw on this model because of the circularity and convergence implied in its visual scape. Unlike the SPIN model, for which the conduits between different networks are more peripheral, the web model proposes that the web has a 'central web maker', the main actant or actants who 'spin' and connect the nodal points of the web. A visual scape for the Climate network may be that of the spiral structure of a galaxy. This may capture the more concentrated bonds the network may be assumed to have at its centre, from which it could operate its pull of attraction, with potentially decreasing involvement as it moves outwards. At the centre of the Climate web we might expect to find the darkest shades of green that can filter through or radiate through the meta-network.

I proposed here that the Climate networks in my study may be understood as a heterogeneous aggregate of networks that are part of a wider contemporary countercultural reformulation. I also proposed that, despite its heterogeneity, the Climate meta-network can be understood to have the ability to re-structure and hybridise constituent networks and can make use of global forms in order to expand and propagate. As in the definition of the 'attractor' principle from physics, the attractor centre of this meta-network can 'attract' the constitutive networks towards a common goal and set of properties. The Climate meta-network makes use of its place-

based nodal convergences to bring together previously unconnected networks. Thus, some networks in the meta-network, such as Climate Camp for example, may function as a central hub or a strategist/ designer network. Finally I advanced that the network expands through framing or translation processes and that constituent networks make use of their own foci or attractors to build up a diverse participation.

Faith Identity as a Primary Relational Identity and the Socio-cognitive Model of Transference

In this section I put forward my own theoretical model for adopting new discourse through changes in one's relational identity. For this purpose I will investigate the concept of relational identity and the socio-cognitive model of transference, a theoretical model primarily used in psychology.

Research shows that risk assessment and decision making concerning Climate Change is first and foremost an affective process rather than a primarily cognitive activity (Leiserowitz 2006). It was necessary to use a model from psychology because it focuses on affective and behavioural changes that go alongside cognitive processes or the adoption of new discourse. I will argue that the model of transference is useful in this investigation and, more generally, in cases of religious innovation, because it highlights the very important link between cognitive, emotional and behavioural processes.

In the previous section of the present chapter I showed that frame alignment is a process of calibration for new activists, whereby they adopt a new interpretative schemata. However this process of calibration is not only a cognitive one, but I argue here, it is most importantly an emotional process. As I discussed in my literature review, Douglas Davies contends that different 'patterns of emotions' are fostered by different religious traditions and according to the socio-cognitive model of transference emotions may be understood to have their own 'schemata', that can become an organising matrix.

My theoretical model proposes that the change in identity in the participants in my research, or rather, the extension of their identity from Christian to Green Christian for example, takes the

form of an affective re-engagement by which green concerns become central to the expression of their faith. Their faith identity is their most salient social identity and hence I propose here that religious environmentalists need to maintain a continuous sense of identity by extending their faith in a new direction whilst maintaining a centred identity. In this way, faith activists can capitalise on their existing relationships with individuals or communities and also form new relationships, with other networks in these movements or even a more interior, reflective, relationship between the self and the planet.

The Socio-cognitive Model of Transference

The socio-cognitive model of transference is connected with relational approaches to identity, or the concept of 'relational identity'. Susan Andersen and Serena Chen (2002) understood the self to be relational, or defined by the relations between the self and significant others. In the relational model of identity, different 'relational selves' constituted the individual's relational repertoire; a repertoire that unfolds dynamically during interpersonal encounters (Andersen and Chen, 2002: 628).

In psychology, 'transference' referred originally to the unconscious redirection of feelings from one person (usually a parent or a significant influential figure during childhood development) to another (Freud, 1912). Since first defined by Freud, the concept of transference had been greatly researched and developed into 'the socio-cognitive model of transference', particularly by Susan Andersen and her colleagues (Andersen, Glassman, Chen & Cole, 1995).

The model focused on the way social perception is influenced by pre-existing schemas. Thus the socio-cognitive model of transference fully departed from the original clinical/pathological implications (Glassman & Andersen, 1999: 89). Noah Glassman and Susan Andersen understood it to be 'ubiquitous and non-pathological' and 'governed by basic social cognitive processes' (ibid.). Pre-existing schemata are our cultural 'structures of feelings', the organisation of emotion and experience in a given time, as they are understood by Raymond Williams (Williams, 1971 referenced by Paul-François Tremlett when introducing 'Cross Cultural Identities', see

Tremlett, 2011), and they are topographically different for different ethnic groups, religious groups, language users, generations.

This model is useful because of its emphasis on the affective dimension of learning or assimilating new information. In essence transference is considered to be an affective process, as it allows for a re-direction of feelings. The socio-cognitive model of transference 'examines the processes by which past assumptions and experiences with significant others manage to resurface in relationships with other people' (Andersen & Chen, 2002: 619). More importantly the model demonstrates how past experiences and relationships shape new ones, as associations (between past and present encounters) are made as a means of learning and understanding. The significant others in a person's life are often represented by parents and care-givers, but also by many important others, who might have been positively or negatively valued. Hence, transference stimulated 'emotional, motivational and behavioural responses' (Andersen & Chen, 2002: 628) respective to or in response to a unique original matrix.

We might argue that not only humans can constitute significant others, but place itself should not be ignored in our (past or present) encounters. Andersen and Chen called such 'environmental cues', 'transient' or contextual, and did not consider them to be as important as 'chronic cues' - cues that were directly derived from significant (human) others, had a high frequency of activation over time and thus more readily provoked processes of transference (Andersen and Chen, 2002: 620). From an eco-critical standpoint, it could however be argued that such a distinction (between important human cues and secondary/ transient environmental ones) was derived from our inculcated anthropocentric/divided view of the world. Place (and conversely the sensory decoding of place) could be intrinsically contained in our memories and feelings of safety, love, home, parents; new places would often be assessed for their 'homely' feel, a very basic example for transference.

Andersen and Chen (2002) suggested that in some relationships, where transference was not immediately possible, as there were no similarities, or there were core differences, between the person newly encountered and the past significant others that had shaped the relational self, the relationship could still form, albeit more gradually, through progressive emotional and motivational

investments. Such a relationship would have the added benefit of (positive) personal growth: 'This possibility implies that the self can be extended in positive directions on the basis of newly formed relationships and thus offers some hope for changing counterproductive patterns and building desired identities...' (Andersen & Chen, 2002: 638). We could infer from this last that activists could learn how to love the planet without necessarily superimposing it on available cognitive-affective units, such as the one (currently or previously) occupied by God.

The socio-cognitive model of transference explains the relation between knowing/learning, feeling and behaving. It suggests that knowing about the planet is an affective process and that relating affectively to something provokes identity changes in our repertoire of identities. It adds a new voice to the multi-voiced self. I advanced the view that the model is useful when looking at the very processes that stimulate the adoption of new discourse, which is not an isolated process but necessarily related to affective, behavioural and identity changes. I will further make use of this model in the ethnographic chapters that follow.

Ecological Ritual and Relating to the Planet

In this section I will argue that ecological ritual aims to create a relational identity between participants and the planet. I also propose that ritual is in essence a means of harmonising place or from the view point of assemblage theory presented above, an opportunity for 're-assemblage'. I propose that, in ritual, evoked or invoked place acts upon actual place, creating what Marion Bowman refers to as a 'serial centrality' or hyperlocalisation' (Bowman 2005: 165). The evoked place may be memorialised, familiar, physical place, 'the home'. The invoked place may be an imagined transcendental locus. I propose that we may understand ritual as an attempt to harmonise and 'centre' place through the intermediary of language and meaning, not only to make it safe when the evoked place is the home, but also to make it sacred or imbue it with power when the invoked place is the cosmos.

My theoretical model on ritual proposes that language and meaning – and thus ritual language and meaning – has its own spatial matrix or its own spatial coordinates. This is relevant

when talking about the planet, since our modern conceptualisation of the planet extends or pushes our historical matrixes of meaning outside their familiar 'territory'. On a spatial axis of 'above' and 'below' or 'near' and 'far', the planet is all of those, and includes any terrestrial system of reference.

Language, Place and the Language of Planetary Beings

In Linguistic studies a turning point in understanding language is represented by the self-made linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf, who first grasped 'the relationship between human language and human thinking', succinctly put, that a language is a world-view:

We are introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated (Whorf, 1962 [1956]: v).

In his *Origins of Meaning: Language in the Light of Evolution*, James R. Hurford (2007) contends at the very start of his argument that 'in the beginning was meaning' or that 'in the beginning was action', so that meaning and action preceded and laid the basis for human words (2007: xi).

The physical relationship between language/meaning and its place of provenance is mostly neglected by scholars. Yet different places are not merely different sets and props in a *theatrum mundi* where our human drama goes on (Kohàk, 2000: 18), but real places, with different riches, dangers, stories. If speakers of different languages 'are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe' it is also because, in the creation of their respective language, different things were observed, other relationships forged.

It can be suggested that in the creation of a language, *place* represents *its very own system of reference*. Some more geographically specific approaches to language acknowledge this. Hence in 'Ecology and Religion in Karuk Orientations Towards the Land', Sean Connors discusses the indivisible link between the Karuk language and the environment (Connors, 2000: 139-151). Connors notices the prominence of the Klamath River in their language and culture and emphasises the need to include place in our scholarly learning of people:

the land has shaped Karuk people's religious traditions even as their religious traditions have oriented the ways in which they, in turn, shaped the Klamath landscape (ibid.: 142).

In his article 'Language and the Making of Place' Yi-Fu Tuan, writing on cultural geography, discusses the role of language in the creation of place, such as architecture, landscape art and gardening. He asserts that:

it is not possible to understand or explain the physical motions that produce place without overhearing [...] the speech – the exchange of words – that lie behind them (Tuan, 1991: 684-685).

In his discussion of the Ojibwe language, Graham Harvey points out that the grammatical forms 'spoken by the people' as well as 'their ceremonies, traditional stories, their elders' teachings, [...] their taken-for-granted daily activities and relationships', all contain the expression of their experiential knowledge (Harvey, 2005b: 33) and so their meaning-making further makes meaning on the same coordinates we might say. We may speculate that these coordinates of meaning are derived from the place we inhabit or rather, place represents the very DNA of language and shapes our inner matrixes of meaning, our perception and interior representation of proximity and distance, safety and danger. This last may be supported by research studies on cultural communication codes, an area of major focus for linguists. Specific studies in verbal and non-verbal communication suggest that different cultures regard proximity and distance differently in various situations (Mehrabian [1972] 2009: 2-6).

If we consider that a language (or meaning-making) contains the spatial coordinates of its place of origin (with all its inhabitants), then language restoration or linguistic segregation might symbolise the reclamation of the homeland. Ritual language (like Latin or Old Slavic) becomes an invocation of place, an attempt to organise new places on the familiar coordinates of a place of origin. In this light religious architecture might be in some contexts more than 'the telling of a story' (Collins, 2006: 153), but also an insemination of place. Learning about/ understanding 'the planet' will be a completely different process in two different languages. Similarly this will differ from one place to another, from a rural setting to an urban one, from a mountainous terrain to the seaside.

John Eade and David Garbin (2007) show that transnational migrations in our contemporary world have produced dynamic re-interpretations of centre and periphery for old and new settlers. The authors show that immigrant communities in Britain negotiated new understandings of their home routes and the relationship between centre and periphery was re-interpreted through a sacralisation of local place (Eade & Garbin, 2007: 415-417). Climate activists are part of a global movement that claims the planet as its 'home'. The road protests of the 1990s had already anticipated this global focus by their very location, through the emphasis on routes and connections. Yet, such protests as the ones on Salisbury Hill (1994 and 1996) had been concentrated on a local scene, often invoking elements of national pride, local history, fauna and flora, or simply topophilia (Yi-Fu Tuan, 1974), love and attachment for an actual place. The climate discourse is, in contrast, global and oriented towards the planet as a whole, the planet as 'one place'. Moreover representations of the planet are very prevalent in my field of research. This may bring the planet into a more proximal/central relationship with humans. The planet itself, through representation, can become part of one's relational identity, in the same way a religious icon is not just an object but a central pole that holds up the relational link to the devotee's religious identity.

Ritual and Place

Religious Studies scholars have criticised the one-dimensional 'linking of place, culture and identity', which was seen as 'fixed and determined in advance', and lacked recognition of 'complex identifications and processes of inclusion and exclusion' (Feuchtwang, Shih & Tremlett, 2006:49). Stephan Feuchtwang, Fang-Long Shih and Paul-François Tremlett further suggest that examining the 'process of place-making and representational practices' in a Religious Studies context may allow for 'religion's possible re-configuration as a site for struggle, place-making and identification' (ibid., 37, 53).

John Eade and David Garbin (2006) argue that transnational networks in our contemporary world are connected to global developments and entertain global concerns (social, political, cultural) – yet are left with a vision of a 'home community' and national identity, that are only

ephemerally territorialised through festivals or celebrations. Similarly, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997), argue that

[s]omething like a transnational public sphere has certainly rendered any strictly bounded sense of community or locality obsolete. At the same time it has enabled the creation of forms of solidarity and identity that do not rest on appropriation of space where contiguity or face-to-face contact are paramount. In the pulverised space of postmodernity, space has not become irrelevant: it has been re-territorialised in a way that does not conform to the experience of space that characterized the era of high modernity (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997: 37).

Thus even if postmodernity changed or, as Gupta and Ferguson put it here, ‘pulverised’ the way space is perceived or indeed conceptualised, these authors do not assert that space has in turn become irrelevant, but, they maintain, scholars need to ‘theorise how space is being re-territorialised in the contemporary world’ vis-à-vis new grids of power and resources (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997: 50).

From the point of view of assemblage theory I propose that ritual presents an opportunity for re-assemblage. In some ways ritual has long been considered as an opportunity for a re-assemblage. According to Abraham Maslow, a prime characteristic of peak experiences is the experience ‘fusion, integration and unity’ (Maslow 1987 [1970]: 66). Numerous interpretations of the ritual process also point to ‘a recovered unity’ (Turner, 1969: 93), ‘a [re]incorporation’ (van Gennep, 1960: 191), or clearly ‘an assemblage’ (Durkheim, 1995 [1915]: 465). Recent avenues on ritual and entrainment (Grimes, 2005; Clayton et al., 2008) similarly suggest that ritual provides the opportunity to stop as an individual and begin again or synchronise together.

Whether or not we look at ritual as a natural form of organisation, ritual might be an opportunity to synchronise all participants, to stop as one and begin again as many, or perhaps even stop as many and begin as one. An analogy is provided by the double slit experiment in quantum physics whereby particles can choose to travel as either individual particles or as waves (Gribbin, 1998 [1984]: 81-92). Yet such unity cannot be achieved in a vacuum and it therefore cannot only involve human participants, but necessarily, their surroundings. The human participants in a ritual

cannot be divided from the place (or places) they occupy unless they are cut and pasted on a blank canvas. Place itself participates in a ritual.

Participation can be restricted by circumscribing the limits of those who come together, through the allocation of marked space that separates them from the rest. Various distinctions of sacred space (Holm and Bowker, 1994), such as sacred natural environment or sacred buildings, could perhaps also be seen as inclusive or exclusive in synchronising rituals.

If some of these demarcations are looked at through the prism of the coordinates of meaning contained by language itself, then place itself might be treated as inimical, as it threatens established world-views. This separation from place is obviously not the only possible outcome. In most cases missionary religions acclimatise and grow roots, as Marion Bowman explains in her 'Ancient Avalon, New Jerusalem, Heart Chakra of the Planet Earth: the Local and the Global in Glastonbury': 'localisation has been inherent to the spread of global religions, far beyond the simple addition of cultural trimmings' (Bowman, 2005: 165). Hence this process of 'localising the global and globalising the local' is 'what religions have traditionally done in a variety of ways', Marion Bowman further contends (Bowman, 2005: 165).

On the one hand, a 'safe' and 'homely' territory or place is inseminated into an 'unsafe' and potentially dangerous place/space – as may be the case with migrants who come to domesticate the unknown wilderness of other lands and find or forge harmonious relationships with the land. On the other hand, in invoking the distant and 'potentially dangerous', there is also an opportunity to invoke its power. Hence in his book *Prehistoric Astronomy and Ritual*, Aubrey Burl shows that '[e]ndangered [prehistoric] societies safeguarded themselves [against the threatening forces of nature] through rituals that centred on the sun and moon' (Burl, [1983] 2005: 11). Bringing the distant into proximity makes this threatening, faraway place, safe. In this light, ritual may be described as a process of reconnecting and re-assembling place.

For a Christian community, the church may be understood to provide a harmonious space that could (temporarily) redress any mismatch or conflict between individual values and wider social norms. In this case an enclosed place can be seen to provide a space of congruence for language/meaning (also contained in the very architecture of the building itself – see Yi-Fu Tuan's

(1991, 684-696) article 'Language and the Making of Place: A Narrative-Descriptive Approach'), ritual and participants. It is therefore a space where meaning-making can freely take place on familiar coordinates. The participants can find sanctuary in a place where personal and social values are calibrated. Thus no effort, or less effort, is required here to interpret reality in a satisfactory way – a way that allows for meaning to be reinforced with minimal anxiety.

Although I do not have solid data to support this, my observation is that the need to represent the planet in eco-religious rituals is a lot more prevalent with those who have a tradition of transcendence, such as Christians. The planet (stripped bare) can become a unifying topos, unlikely to produce any conflicts of world-view among participants. The alternative - that of having everyone's symbols present - is also sometimes used in multi-faith settings, yet that risks reminding all about their differences.

Some religionists hold rituals and vigils in the Arctic, a practice which perhaps more clearly shows how space can be re-territorialised and re-assembled through ritual. Coming together in the Arctic makes an interesting point, not only because this is a very significant place for Climate Change, due to the melting of the ice caps, but also because the Arctic remains somewhat unclaimed, religiously or historically. It is untarnished and can be a blank canvas, a new beginning or *terra nullis*. This fits perhaps with Schechner's (1993:25) view of ritual as an exploration, a practice run or safe frame where we can imagine and learn new ways of being and explore such new possibilities as religious unity and ecological awareness.

I proposed here that in ritual, evoked or invoked place acts upon actual place. The evoked place may be memorialised, familiar, physical place, 'the home'. The invoked place may be a distant or an imagined transcendental locus representing the cosmos. I proposed that we may understand ritual as an attempt to harmonise place, not only to make it safe, when the evoked place is the home, but also to imbue it with power, when the evoked place is the cosmos.

Functionally, this more harmonious or homogenous new assemblage could, in some cases, alleviate the stress and anxiety of inhabiting an unsafe territory, by creating a 'serial centrality' or 'hyperlocalisation' (Bowman 2005: 165). Hence the insemination of (actual) place with (evoked) place may allow for the creation of a meaningful centre. In eco-ritual, such as the Cosmic Walk,

earth itself becomes such a meaningful centre in the grand setting of the Universe, or the heartland of the universe. The Universe is symbolically located at the centre of the spiral through 'The Great Emergence', inseminating new meaning. Here 'local – global' is expanded into 'global – cosmic'. The scale on this temporal map of the universe is now as small as it can be, zoomed out to its furthest frame, so that planet earth (which includes the participants in the ritual) may become 'one place'. I will further apply and discuss this model in Chapter 9, when I will look at ecological ritual.

CHAPTER 4

PROTEST AND LIFESTYLE IN CLIMATE ACTIVIST NETWORKS

This chapter will look at how activist networks organise and interact as the macro-level of my research. On one level the networks in the Climate Movement function like Latour's anti-groups and their examination will help define the religious groups and networks investigated in this thesis. In the first section I discuss the Climate Movement and what differentiates it from the wider climate scene, further discuss the protest – lifestyle polarity in this field and offer a climate activist profile based on my quantitative data. In section two I examine the Transition Towns Movement, using mainly secondary sources. In the third section I consider consensus decision making and Permaculture design as shared standards in the field, and examine how in this form they may help extend the networks. Finally I argue that the two movements may be seen not only as movements of personal and social transformation but also as movements of social adaptation, or aculturalisation, helping mainstream society make sense of rapid and profound changes.

The Climate Movement

For the purpose of this thesis I use the phrase 'Climate Movement' to refer to the British expression of this global movement that began in 2005. I only collected data in Britain and so, although I may point broadly to global directions, my analysis is grounded in the British context. As it is often the case, language cannot fully capture life, and so the phrase 'Climate Movement' is in many ways deficient in truly describing the complex aggregation of networks that may be understood to form it.

In December 2010, on the eve of the Global Day of Action, after its significant decrease in numbers, the Climate Camp announced on its website: 'The Climate Movement Lives!' As Climate Change requires global mitigation and the British campaign intends to 'pioneer a global

movement', demonstrations are often held simultaneously in many countries, with an inside report of eighty-four participant countries on the Global Day of Action 2008. At national level meetings are often organised with the declared intention of stimulating regional mobilisation and therefore held at various locations to achieve this goal.

As ecology comes under different shades of green, we can understand the Climate Movement to incorporate a variety of inter-linked networks, with distinctive responses to Climate Change. There are many Climate initiatives across the country and internationally, including, in the UK, a government 'Act on CO₂' campaign, yet not all these can be understood to be part of the Climate Movement. It would be safe to say that the Climate Movement is positioned *against* the government or governments, or against such political organisations as G8 for example, seeking to mobilise political energy to act on Climate Change. In contrast the 'Act on CO₂' government campaign seeks primarily to influence consumer behaviour or change consumers' attitudes on emissions.

Although many organisations campaign against CO₂ emissions, or rather campaign for CO₂ cuts, climate activists emphasize self-transformation and aim for a radical and urgent change of practices and values rather than an adaptation to an environmental problem that needs progressive tackling. For example, the governmental 'Act on CO₂' campaign often stresses the importance of 'doing one's bit for the environment' or the fact that it makes economic sense to be green as it helps save money: not surprisingly the prefix 'eco-' is used in advertisements meaning both 'ecological' and 'economical'. Many activists call this approach 'green-wash' and by that they mean that environmentalism is packaged with existing monetary concerns and consumerist values and encouraged through a discretionary minimum effort: 'one's bit'.

Although it would be outside of the scope of this thesis to analyse the government's campaign on Climate Change, I should briefly exemplify how radically its tone has changed during 2008/2009. An 'Act on CO₂' advertisement produced for DEFRA and circulated in 2008, also known as 'Blue Car is Green', depicts a father who is buying a new low emissions car that 'is good for your pocket and is good for the environment'. When his daughter asks whether the new car is going to be green, dad answers emphatically: 'No, it's Copacabana blue!' This advertisement is

perhaps aimed at a consumer who does not need to conform to 'green' standards but can keep his own colours on his mast, as economical thinking is after all good for the environment. Just one year later, in 2009, a new CO₂ advertisement released by the government, called 'Change How the Story Ends', once again makes use of a father and daughter scenario, this time the father reading a bed time story. The story describes what Climate Change means and how the grown ups realised that the children are to suffer horrible consequences and decide they have to do something. When the child asks 'Is it a happy ending?' there is no answer from her father but the advertisement ends with 'It is up to us how the story ends...'

In government campaigns ordinary people become responsible for Climate Change: 'It is up to us how the story ends' or, also in the bed time Climate Change story, 'they discovered that over 40% of the CO₂ was coming from *ordinary things* like keeping houses warm or driving cars, which meant that if they made less CO₂ maybe *they* could save the land for the children' [my emphasis]. The government message is that of bringing awareness and thus lowering emissions. Yet by making Climate Change an issue of individual responsibility and personal calculation rather than one that requires social cohesion, it fails to assemble people together and make a real stand on implementing new environmental policies.

In contrast Climate activists do not think that world governments' plans for reducing green house gases are as urgent as they need to be, and that a 'business as usual' attitude is the official response to a most urgent matter. Climate activists commonly think that it is primarily the government's job to invest in green technology and to stop new coal from being sourced. They believe that the government should not make this a discretionary issue that is placed in the hands of its people, but ensure compliance through taxation and legislation. For many activists Climate Change is also an opportunity to renounce the consumerist lifestyle modern societies have become accustomed to and look towards a complete societal change in the form of a post-carbon and post-oil society. Some urge or seek to inspire a fundamental personal transformation, 'a revolution of the spirit', as described by the honorary president of the Campaign against Climate Change, George Monbiot (Monbiot, 2007).

Certainly the person or persons who produced the DEFRA advertisements may very well be taking part in climate marches and protest activities. The intersections in this field are numerous and the boundaries often dissolve during events. For example many activists are also involved in Transition Towns and at the Global Day of Action in 2009 and 2010 some Transition towns were officially represented in the march. Yet I maintain that the Transition Towns Movement should be regarded as a distinct movement from the Climate Movement, albeit heavily intersected by it.

Thus we can understand the Climate Movement as a web of networks, brought together by action on Climate Change. Despite their diversity, these networks come together in the nodal hubs of the web, in the Parliament Square in London, or at national and regional Climate Camps, and even internationally, in Copenhagen. The nodal system of the climate web is often represented by the Climate Camp or Camp for Climate Action. These are the main nodal intersections in the movement responsible for its processes of re-territorialisation. A representative umbrella organisation for the climate web could be the 'Stop Climate Chaos Coalition', which is by its own description:

[t]he UK's largest group of people dedicated to action on Climate Change and limiting its impact on the world's poorest communities. Our combined supporter base of more than 11 million people spans over 100 organisations from environment and development charities to unions, faith, community and women's groups. Together we demand practical action by the UK (sic) to prevent global warming rising beyond the 2 degrees C danger threshold (Climate, 2009).

I understand the Climate Movement to be the meta-network that brings together all the other networks under one umbrella by focusing these networks around a common goal: to prevent global warming rising beyond a certain threshold. The movement is made up of all the diverse political, religious, environmental, social groups as well as those unaffiliated individuals who support the campaign for a low/ zero carbon economy. As I advanced in my network theoretical model, despite its heterogeneity and fragmentation the movement has Climate Change as a fundamental attractor. The annual Global Day of Action is a material expression for the Climate Movement, when all its diverse constituent groups come together, at national and international level.

At this macro level the scope is identified as simply demanding political action on Climate Change, without any of the specifics of how a low carbon economy and society should be achieved. Nuclear power or bio-fuels are supported by some and opposed by others but the divergences inside the movement are not prominent at this level. Encircling the House of Parliament and doing the Mexican Wave together (Global Day of Action 2009) represents a clear message of solidarity at a basic level. Having blue as a dress code is (besides its obvious symbolism as the sea level rise) also suggestive of this message of unity and possibly a progressive departure from the Green Movement, with the metonym 'going blue' having circulated by the media.

In the publicised call for the Day of Action or the Wave the emphasis lies on 'global', 'public' or 'people of all backgrounds', underlining its all inclusive purpose or aspiration.

On Saturday 5 December 2009, ahead of the crucial UN Climate summit in Copenhagen, tens of thousands of people from *all walks of life* [my emphasis] will march through the streets of London to demonstrate their support for *a safe Climate future for all* [my emphasis] (Wave, 2009).



Fig. 3 Marching in 'The Wave', Global Day of Action, London 2009

Finally the Climate Movement is connected to previous movements. The influences of these movements can be seen in much of the ecological and sustainability literature that has been published in the past three or so decades – Fritjof Capra's *The Turning Point* (1982) is perhaps an epitome for the complete re-structuring of society that was prefigured then. The New Age Movement's emphasis on personal transformation that can lead to societal change (Ferguson, 1987) is perhaps described by the Climate slogan 'be the change you want to see', meaning one needs to start with oneself. Here in Britain, the Schumacher College and the Findhorn Community represent some of the most influential confluences of the New Age Movement, the Human Potential Movement and Deep ecology (see Corrywright, 2004; Sutcliffe, 2003), and the many associations between these and the Climate and Transition Towns Movements (such as training events, supportive activities, publications etc.) demonstrate that these links either persist from previous contacts or that they are made due to common or shared territory.

Although the Climate Movement may be considered diachronically as the latest stage of the Environmental movement, its focus, organisation and vision are quite different from the anti-nuclear movements of the late 1970s and 1980s or the road protests of the 1990s (Merrick, 1996), mainly through the emerging post-carbon vision, and at a bigger scale, through its wider and more varied political and religious involvement. I adopt here a genealogic outlook, whereby I propose that although the Climate Movement might be seen as related to the above mentioned and other earlier and coexistent movements, such as the Peace Movement, it has a marked ethos that cannot easily be integrated in existing scholarly taxonomies for social movements. This is not only because of its specific particularities but also because Climate Change benefits from mainstream scientific and political support which was not available, or at least was not as directly accessible, in the case of many other environmental and social justice causes.

In Britain the Campaign against Climate Change largely organises legal protests and activities, whilst other more radical networks, such as Plane Stupid, Rising Tide (see Glossary) and the Climate Camp focus mostly on direct action activities. Particularly the Climate Camp brings together a multitude of more radical activist organisations and grassroots networks, and it can be viewed like a central hub in the movement. Climate activists will most commonly be involved in

both legal actions, such as 'The Global Day of Action', and a whole spectrum of other forms of protest, from taking part in the workshops offered at Climate Camp, to, more extremely, standing in the way of coal diggers or sabotaging equipment.

Protest and (or versus) Lifestyle

The Climate Camp, as a deep green (or blue) core of the Climate Movement in Britain, has a specific ethos, political orientation and post-carbon vision, hence sharing territory with the Transition Towns Movement through its lifestyle dimension. In fact this polarity between collective, societal political action and individual or community lifestyle change is present at different levels throughout my data and will become evident in the following chapters.

During Climate Camps protesters live together for what can range from just a few days (G20 camp) to over ten days (Kingsnorth), in collective settlements organised like communes, using exclusively renewable energy (wind and solar), building and cooking on rocket stoves (see Glossary), composting all waste, eating a vegan diet, organising neighbourhood meetings, training for direct action, learning about green economics, politics, technology and so on. There are other such events that organise similarly but do not have the protest character, like the Big Green Gathering in UK or the Ecotopia Gathering (see Glossary), held each year in different countries around Europe.

The discussions held at Climate Camp are not all about climate, green economy and politics. Many workshops discuss issues on religion, gender, media – albeit related to the Green concerns activists share. For example the programme at the London Climate Camp in 2009 had four workshops on gender issues entitled: 'Confronting the backlash on feminism', 'Eco-feminist storytelling', 'Women and the miner strike' and 'Policing of Women: Greenham, race, rape and prostitution'. These are clearly issues which are already part of the eco-feminist critique. Moreover activists, particularly women activists, have a chance to relate to other women activists from previous campaigns, such as the miner strike or the anti-nuclear campaign at Greenham Common

(see Glossary). This process shapes the activists' identity by integrating a personal story within a collective history.

It is nevertheless important to emphasise that, based on the discussions and activities at Climate Camp, not all activists seem to have an already worked out blue-print for what a post-carbon society might look like. Many are simply taking part in an exploration of possibilities and a search for available solutions. It might be necessary to distinguish between activists who seem more committed to an ideal post carbon society and others who are mainly interested in preventing 'runaway Climate Change' through any means possible. Nuclear energy is a good example for this divide. Most activists would think that our energy needs should dramatically diminish and would commonly urge a change of lifestyle. Yet not all activists would reject nuclear energy, and some favour it and debate its environmental risks. Another issue that is somewhat debated although not creating any significant divisions, is the vegan diet that is exclusively offered on camp. All four Climate Camps I participated in offered an (almost exclusive) vegan diet. If in 2008 the kitchen at Kingsnorth had some jars of mayonnaise that had arrived through donations, in 2009 the London Camp rules clearly stated that only vegan food was permitted in kitchens. Here donations that contained dairy were refused or simply donated to the local shelter. This created some disagreement, especially when food supplies were seen to be running low.

Climate Camp is declaredly 'a Camp for Climate Action', yet some activists remarked at the last camp I attended in 2010 that the camp is becoming too concerned with lifestyle, neglecting or shying away from direct action. Some activists have called it a 'festival', implying that it has tamed its ways and has stepped back from its protest ethos. Moreover protest itself is negotiated at different levels and campers often distinguish between their actions as 'spiky' or 'fluffy', which indicates the degree of danger involved, the outcomes to be achieved, as well as the consequences, namely getting arrested or not. Fluffy actions are carnivalesque in nature and could involve 'clowning', 'bantering with the police', dressing up, and so on. Spiky actions more commonly involve the creation of 'an affinity group' and a high level of planning, proportional to the aims and outcomes of the action that is being decided on.

The Climate Camp

Climate Camp is also referred to in the media and in their official website as 'The Camp for Climate Action', but I will be using here the more popular (emic) descriptor: Climate Camp. Climate Camp activists, or 'climate campers' represent, by self definition 'a grassroots global movement' (in the Climate Camp Handbook, 2008), that aims to prevent 'runaway Climate Change' or global warming that can no longer be controlled through mitigation. They aim to do so by a variety of means, principally by attempting to compel policy makers to implement legislation that can coordinate a global move towards a zero-carbon economy and also by building a vision for a post-carbon society.

The Climate Camp marked its beginnings at its first protest camp in 2006 at the Drax power station in North Yorkshire, followed by Heathrow airport in 2007, Kingsnorth power station in Kent in 2008, the G20 Camp in London in April 2009, the Welsh and London camps in August 2009 and 2010, respectively. The Copenhagen Camp in December 2009 coincided with the United Nations talks on Climate Change, and had a dual effect on the movement: it widened its scope, making it more aware of its global status, yet it also deflated the national movement to an extent, as it was made it aware of its limitations.

Although I have mainly done my research qualitatively, in 2009 I administered a survey at the Welsh and London Climate Camps. My findings show that the movement has attracted many people who are new to activism (almost half), among whom a significant number (78%) are young people (16 to 25), whilst those who were previously involved in environmental and peace campaigns have a more even age distribution (see Appendix 7). This supported my hypothesis that the Climate Movement has attracted a diverse participation, and that although it can be genealogically related to the wider Environmental Movement, it has in fact a distinct ethos and emphasis. Among those who had been involved in previous campaigns a high number is represented by Friends of the Earth and People and Planet, which are both campaigns that have a global vision (rather than focused on localised environmentalism or conservation). Both my qualitative and quantitative data (gathered from climate activists, transitioners and faith groups)

point to one central aim: local community building. Activists considered direct action and community building, as the most effective ways to combat Climate Change (Appendix 5).

One question in my survey asked activists to describe their religious affiliation, if they had one. The results (Appendix 8) show that only 16% of those who participated in this survey were able to name a religious tradition (such as Buddhism), a denomination (such as Catholic) or a religious organisation (such as GreenSpirit). Among those 16% who indicated a religious affiliation, the highest numbers were represented by Buddhists (25%) and Pagans (16%), yet Christians (14%) and Muslims (3%) were also represented.

The figures from the London Camp show a variance, with only 10% describing a religious affiliation of any kind and over 55% describing themselves as atheists or not religious. The percentages are based on my interpretation of the descriptive answers informants gave. Informants were asked how they would describe their religious affiliation and offered sufficient blank space to do so. They were not given any examples or any taxonomy to go by. It is of course debatable whether those who fell under 'partly religious' because they admitted to 'some Christian values' are any different in their outlook from any other from the atheist/not religious group who had a secondary education in a Church of England school.

Some of these descriptions would perhaps fall under the New Age Movement's eclectic mix if we would apply an academic interpretation, yet I aimed to follow the description as closely or basically as I could and hence cumulated these under the 'poly-religionist/ multi-faith' group. However more than one informant named four to five different traditions in their description: 'Unitarian, Pagan/Muslim/Buddhist with Christian roots', as an 'extreme' example. Among those who indicated they did not have a religious affiliation yet they were open to spirituality, again some answers could be seen to fall under New Age rhetoric: 'No religious affiliation but would call myself a *spiritual seeker* [my emphasis]. The problem is basically one of consciousness...'

Interestingly, the reluctance of the Climate Camp to associate with religious practices and traditions is sometimes reflected in the answers that contain a disclaimer:

My religious beliefs *aren't affiliated to this camp* [my emphasis], but I revere nature and celebrate the seasons through ceremonies with the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids.

Other answers indicate a polarity between religion/ spirituality and activism:

Buddhist background, increasingly putting social and activist life over spiritual practice – or are they in fact the same thing [...] is Buddhism a spirituality for the lonely and lost?

These findings suggest that most activists (at least half) have a secular outlook. Although a small percentage mentioned 'Green spirituality' or 'eco-spirituality', this was not a significant number. Qualitative data also suggests that activists are more concerned with active involvement, rather than spiritual practice. During a workshop on direct action many of the activists present agreed that to them direct action answered their need for spirituality or was a deep, meaningful experience.

Where environmental movements are concerned, research shows that class constitutes an important criterion of organisation and environmental militancy is mainly a middle class movement (as opposed to industrial working class movements), with participants who are in their majority highly educated and bringing specific competences to the group or network (della Porta & Diani, [1999] 2006). Yet della Porta and Diani critique these findings on the basis of the fragmentation of the middle class into a traditional middle class and the new post-industrial middle class, as well as other shifting social roles that blur such rigid boundaries ([1999] 2006: 58-60). It is interesting to note that climate activists often reflect on class distribution and self-critique the British campaign as a 'white, middle-class' movement. Hence among the workshops held at Climate Camp, activists also discussed 'The Movement and Class' (Kingsnorth, 2008), with a focus of making the campaign more inclusive and capable of mobilising people across class and ethnicity. Support for working class syndicates (such as the Vestas workers in Newport) represent ways of bridging the class gap as well as pursuing socialist political platforms. Where education is concerned, it can be inferred that Climate Change activism implies a certain degree of scientific literacy and activists (especially older activists) are usually fully conversant with carbon science and technology.

Transition Towns Movement

Transition Towns (TT) is a very prolific movement that began in 2005 in Britain and has now achieved global representation, more prominently in Western Europe, Australia, the United States. The Transition Towns Movement aims to mobilise local communities and prepare them for ‘the challenges and opportunities of energy descent’, to, as the name suggests, achieve the transition to a post-carbon society.

The Transition Towns Movement made its way into my research as I began to realise how intricately connected this movement was with climate activism. The Christian Ecology Link (CEL) started its own support campaign called ‘Churches in Transition’, whilst members of the London Islamic Network for the Environment/ Wisdom in Nature (LINE/ WIN) organised the *Heart and Soul* in their own Transition town. Despite the seemingly static emphasis on ‘community’, The Transition Movement is extremely dynamic and ‘transitioning’ is a form of social activism. Transitioners often talk of being ‘burned-out’ and have to step down to make way for new blood. In fact the first of the twelve steps of embarking on a transition journey reads as follows: ‘Step #1 Set up a steering group and design its demise from the onset’. This is both to avoid rigid behaviour setting into the transition process and also to protect the members of the steering group who would have deployed all their available energy and efforts into starting the group.

A brief history of the Transition Towns Movement must state that it rather inspirationally began in 2005 with a group of students from Kinsale Further Education College being asked by their Permaculture teacher, Rob Hopkins, to put together an energy descent plan for their town. Hopkins acknowledged his main sources of inspirations as David Holmgren’s *Permaculture: Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability* (2003) and Richard Heinberg’s *Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-carbon World* (2004). The students worked together on their assignment, addressing all different areas and processes – from sustainable building and technology to producing local food. One student, Louise Rooney, developed the Transition Towns concept further and upon presenting their work to the Town Council, the plan was historically

adopted as a working blueprint for Kinsale. Following this initial success Rob Hopkins decided to start Transition Town Totnes, his home town, in the same year.

To date, six years later, eight hundred Transition Towns initiatives (cities, towns, villages or even streets) have been started in Britain. Wikipedia quotes, as of May 2010, over 3000 communities recognized as official Transition Towns in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Italy and Chile. In 2009, Rob Hopkins was granted *The Observer Ethical Award* and the *Grassroots Campaigner of the Year*. If we wished to argue the fact that Transition Towns is becoming assimilated in the 'popular habitus' in Britain, it might suffice to say that there is even a *Transition Ambridge*, which is a fictional community in UK's longest running and extremely topical radio soap opera, *The Archers*.

Transitioners attempt to change the political structure from within, through local community building, local currency and autonomous governance, yet silently and non-confrontationally transforming existing structures by working with local authority and other existing organisations. It is important to note that they are not just enjoying their autonomous status, as new social movements are supposed to be doing, but are involved in a proselytising/evangelising process, organising public events in their community and hence attempting to begin its 'transition'. Seen in tandem, the Climate and Transition Towns Movements may represent the incarnation of what James O'Connor (1998) in his *Natural Causes: Essays on Ecological Marxism* had envisaged as 'The International Red Green Movement' (1998: 299-305) – a coalition between 'red' (communist) and 'green' (ecological) discourses which O'Connor saw possible if they were not only able to "think globally and act locally" but also to "think locally and act globally", and ultimately "think and act both globally and locally" (ibid.: 300). In this context, 'thinking globally' is not only intended to refer to scale (see Sarre and Smith, 1991: 166-183). As Philip Sarre and Paul Smith point out, global thinking involves the developing of a holistic approach, as: '[e]nvironmental issues do not exist in isolation from economic, political and social processes and they certainly cannot be tackled in isolation' (Sarre & Smith, 1991: 169).

Just as the Climate Movement opposes religious representation in its efforts for unity, the Transition Town Movement aims to be a self-sufficient model for communities. It often

emphasises its secularity and wishes to remain uninvolved with any faith groups, although some educational links have recently been created. However in its blueprint, TT contains a 'Heart and Soul' group, which in fact offers an outlet for any spiritual or spirituality needs – should there be any want/ need for their expression in the respective community. As any community is free to develop this as they please, the 'Heart and Soul' might be a place for Deep Ecology discussions, dance, artistic expression, drama, poetry, but it might be as little as a book club. Some 'Heart and Soul' groups might simply organise weekly gatherings where people can express their concerns.

Many Transition Towns' 'Heart and Soul' groups would have at some point the possibility of offering a workshop on Joanna Macy's *The Work that Reconnects*, which explores the spiritual side of activism, gives an opportunity for participants to express their emotions in relation to environmental degradation and aims to reconnect participants to nature, to each other and themselves, to the ancestors of the past and the future generations (see Macy & Brown, 1998). I will discuss *The Work that Reconnects* in more depth in Chapter 7, as Joanna Macy's work is widely used by Climate activists, transitioners and, to some extent, it has made its way into the faith groups' activities. My data shows that some transitioners participate in 'Heart and Soul' activities even if they are otherwise uninterested or even feel antagonistic to 'spirituality' - due to their commitment to Transition Towns and their belief in/support of the transition model: that is, equally involving the head, the heart and the hands.

This iconic Transition Town picture (below) seems at first sight to depict a regular village or town – so it feels reassuring but at the same time it attempts a shift in aesthetic values by integrating new technology (solar panels, windmills, etc). There is a road and a cyclist (no cars) and food is growing everywhere. This concept of surrounding or growing around existing structures is central to Permaculture philosophy.

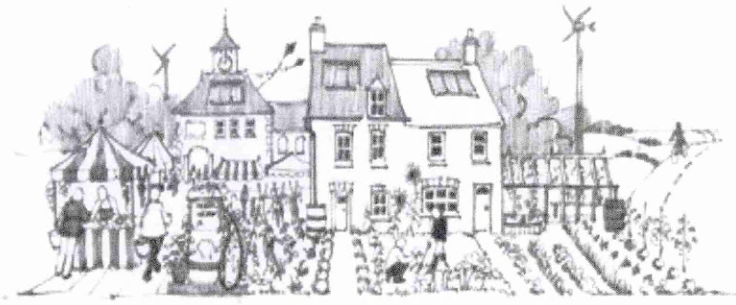


Fig. 4 Iconic depiction of a Transition town, courtesy of *Transition Towns*

These links can be easily recognised inside the Climate and Transition Movements, although their organisation is perhaps less diffuse, and although serendipity and spontaneity are celebrated by participants, we can see a progression from previous, freer, counter-culture movements to a more elaborate, concrete and solidifying organisation. Hence the Transition Towns Movement, although based on the free flowing Permaculture philosophy and promoting ingenuity, freedom and creativity, has from its very start produced written guiding materials and has recognisable leadership (Rob Hopkins and others). If the core of the Climate Movement is deeply counter-cultural and antithetic to existing structures, the Transition Town Movement is evidently more subcultural and perhaps even supportive of mainstream culture, through cooperation with local authorities and other establishments, as well as its reverence for traditional heritage (see fig. 5 below). Both Climate and Transition demonstrate a departure from the more autonomous and self-sufficient Neo-Pagan and New Age cooperatives and communes, through their political and public involvement respectively.

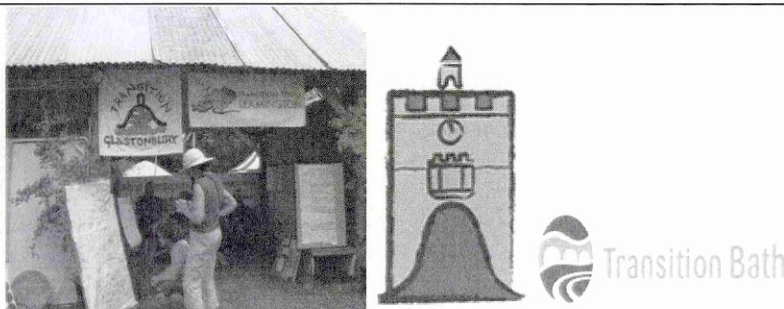


Fig. 5 Transition Flags (from left): Transition Glastonbury, Transition Totnes and Transition Bath – using as emblems Glastonbury Tor, Totnes Castle and Paultney Bridge.

Although the two movements have a great area of intersection, they differ in their political stands: the Climate Movement is more vehemently anti-capitalist and anarchist, whereas the Transition Towns Movement is somewhat unconcerned with the political sphere. Some practices, such as 'garden sharing' (whereby a garden enthusiast is matched with a garden owner for a mutually beneficial relationship) could even suggest that transitioners are entirely comfortable with class divisions, unlike the Climate Movement activists who often draw inspiration from the repressed Digger Movement (1649-1651) for their anti-establishment, communitarian vision.

As Climate Change represents an important paradigm shift for society at large, we can only understand the Climate Movement as part of the wider social impact brought about by our conceptualisation of Climate Change. I suggest that the Climate and Transition movements can be understood firstly through their declared aims as movements of personal and social transformation. Secondly I propose that they are acculturative and adaptive movements (see Trompf (ed.) 1990 for a discussion of cargo cults that accompany periods of radical social changes), which enable given communities to make sense of and adapt to dramatic changes. The Climate Movement is both a cultural and political movement. It aims to influence culture and particularly mainstream culture and change it, take it forward to zero carbon. Thus the Climate Movement brings Climate Change to the fore or makes it visible, as we cannot immediately see Climate Change, even if we understand the science of Climate Change. As I will endeavour to show in the chapters concerned with ritual and performance (Chapter 8 and 9), to help our thinking about future generations (which again may be harder to achieve since we are not necessarily accustomed to thinking this way) the Climate Movement often uses metaphors of urgency (the planet is sick, feverish, dying, 'run-away Climate Change') and hyperbolic satire (for example in some posters depicted the sea level of 2012 flooding the Houses of Parliament).

As a web of networks, the Climate Movement may be considered a hybrid secular-religious movement, as it has aggregated networks from a variety of previously unrelated secular and religious spheres. Both the Climate and Transition Movements would dearly like to offer a self-sufficient model for community and society, to provide unity among the diverse and dispersed networks that make them up. Paradoxically, to offer that kind of unity they are both faced with the

task of providing a proto-religion, a basic and all encompassing religion that could provide the bonding glue in this heterogeneous field, or cement these networks with a common set of beliefs and practices. Transition Towns' Heart and Soul is such an attempt to unite not only across the religious - secular boundaries, but also across various religious traditions. Climate Camps' refusal to have any kind of religious representation (yet at the same time establishing their own ritual practices) is another attempt to find underlying unity across the board. I will show in the next section that shared standards or global forms give this heterogeneous field further unity and also help expand the networks.

Global Forms: Consensus Decision Making and Permaculture Design

Consensus decision making and Permaculture design may represent shared standards or global forms that help ideas to circulate among networks. They both have practical dimensions, because they help in practical terms rather than as ideas, like for example Permaculture design is used in gardening, and consensus is used to organise meetings. Moreover they have both acquired an oral tradition (both are generally taught during meetings rather than through written instructions), and their orality means that they can be de-contextualised and re-contextualised in various situation (see Collier & Ong, 2005: 11) and that different networks can adopt them in part or adapt them to suit their own needs.

Consensus

'Consensus' is widely used by environmental groups across the world and it represents the very core of what Climate activists do at events and gatherings. This method was first used at Climate Camp in 2006 and is now the established method for all meetings and in all processes concerning decisions. Consensus decision making is not clearly delineated historically, but it is believed by some to have been first used by indigenous people and Native American Indians, namely the

Iroquois (Johansen & Grinde, 2003), although it is unlikely that this represents the roots of modern consensus. It seems very probable that it has been adapted from or introduced by the Society of Friends (the Quakers), who have been, in some quarters, using consensus as a way of making decisions for over three centuries (Hare, 1973).



Fig. 6 Consensus meeting at the Climate Camp Cymru, 2009

Consensus, in its contemporary form, uses hand signals from sign language, such as silent clapping for agreement or raising a fist to indicate blocking the decision or disagreement. In short, consensus does not work by choosing between two or more alternatives and organising a vote, but by ‘creatively working’ with the all alternatives until an all-round desirable outcome, or unity, can be reached. Activists call this stage of decision making ‘the process’ and for most the process is as important as the decision that is ultimately reached. Commonly people sit in a circle and are guided by a facilitator who might be experienced or trained in providing group facilitation. All members of the group have the opportunity to volunteer to facilitate meetings, although leadership is often silently recognised even if not explicitly stated. The facilitator gives everyone their turn or may alternate strategies for discussion and is responsible for drawing out a proposal and a collective decision.

For activists, consensus provides an alternative to democratic voting and maintains or establishes a horizontal social structure. Voting, the very building block of democracy is rejected as it excludes the minority in decision making. Johansen and Grinde (2003) identify consensus

decision making as a democratic method that was used by the Iroquois. However activists who use consensus often point out the shortcomings of democratic voting when they contrast it to consensus decision making. To illustrate the difference between the two, during a workshop, an environmental activist told the following story:

We once had one [person in the group] who was not happy about [doing] consensus, and so to us [according to consensus rules] that's a block... you need to see why that happened. So we talked to him and talked to him and he just didn't bend, so I said to everyone: 'Then, let's vote! (ST3)

I took part in numerous consensus meetings and attended a two day workshop on facilitating consensus. Based on my participant observation, consensus can be perceived as an empowering experience. Activists often experience it as having direct influence on decisions made by the group. They may intervene at any point by physically indicating their approval or their reservations as to what is being discussed. The hand gestures maintain involvement, and it is often the case that even in informal meetings or during speeches participants will continue to use these to indicate how they feel about what is being discussed. It is therefore a great tool for maintaining engagement during large gatherings, for expressing emotions and showing one's adherence to a collective identity.

As to how successful it is as a decision making tool, it is debatable whether this method is indeed an opportunity to represent all opinions or whether 'consensus' implies that there is a higher pressure on everyone to agree. In meetings it was always easy to identify those who were going to be the more persuasive speakers or held more power. As consensus does not allow for a minority, once a decision is made, the opportunity to protest or express reservations is limited. Meetings can be very tiresome, as many technical and 'process' (See Glossary) points are raised at the same time and they can last anything from one to six hours (based on my experience). Despite the emphasis on creativity, fresh ideas and flow, meetings can sometimes become stagnant and tediously bureaucratic. It is possible to draw a parallel with some new religious movements, where participants are often asked to become excessively engaged and therefore physically drained through numerous meetings and a very full agenda.

Permaculture

Permaculture design is another shared standard that may even be considered to represent a second language for activists and transitioners alike. Permaculture is centred on learning from nature and applying this learning in everyday living:

The core of Permaculture is design. Design is a connection between things. It's not the water, or a chicken, or a tree. It's how the water, the chicken and the tree are connected. It is the very opposite of what we are taught in schools. Education takes everything and pulls it apart and makes no connection at all. Permaculture makes the connection, because as soon as you've got the connection you can feed the chicken from the tree' (Bill Mollison with Reny Mia Slay, quoted by Schwarz & Schwarz, 1998: 125).

Permaculture's original proponent, Bill Mollison, was an Australian environmentalist who wrote a treatise on its 'Design, Philosophy and Ethics' (Mollison, 1988). This was a way to design your home, your garden, your life. A lot has been written on this subject since, but Mollison's original treatise remained, as one informant called it, 'the Bible of Permaculture'. Permaculture was fondly described by many activists as 'a revolution disguised as organic gardening'. According to my informants, Permaculture had to be named 'because we had forgotten how to live with nature'. In the context of my research I cannot begin to stress enough the relevance of Permaculture. Permaculture is the 'First Pillar' for climate activists, transitioners and faith groups alike, activists spoke Permaculture by suggesting for example 'time to observe' is a decision needed to be reached. London Islamic Network for the Environment became so converted to Permaculture that at the beginning of 2010 the network changed its name from LINE (London Islamic Network for the Environment) to WIN, which stands for 'Wisdom in Nature'. They offered workshops in Permaculture and also participated in Permaculture camps and events. Their primary reason for the change of name was to express their developing ethos but also to get away from the term 'environment' and its anthropocentric stand.

Permaculturists often emphasises doing as little as possible and always waiting to see what the ecosystem is naturally doing before intervening in any way, nurturing the existing connections

and adapting to changing circumstances. It was perhaps this last that made Permaculture so enticing in a changing climate. At the time of my research Permaculture was intrinsic to a multitude of green projects in Britain. The Climate and Transition Movements represented the big players in this field but not the entire team. The list of Permaculture based projects and organisations would probably alone take the space reserved for this article. As Walter and Dorothy (1998) claimed in their anthology of post-consumer living, Permaculture has become

an international lingua franca among Green people, a faith that binds and creates fellowship, a doctrine rich and loose and resonant enough to unite the idealists and the cynics, the urbans and the rurals, the theorists and the practitioners (Schwarz and Schwarz, 1998: 144).

Conclusions

Both movements, Climate and Transition Towns, officially started in 2005. They support each other and have a lot of shared territory, or perhaps the same territory with different emphasis. If the Climate Movement is an opportunity for direct action against the government whilst also practising a different life style, TT is similarly experimenting with a lifestyle change, and takes action by claiming local authority. Transition Towns has a less radical agenda and it stands more moderately on such issues as veganism for example, being more concerned with locally sourced products. Transitioners do co-operate with local authorities, but similarly reclaim power in this process, seeking to promote bioregionalism. In brief, the TT movement seeks to prepare local communities to become sustainable, use renewable energy, grow local food and become resilient in the face of Climate Change and the anticipated oil crisis, or Peak Oil.

I proposed in this chapter that the two movements are not only movements that promote personal and social change, although they clearly do this amply. I propose that the two movements are also acculturative or adaptive movements, they help society cope with social change that is happening too rapidly and helps individuals make personal sense of these profound changes. Just like 'protest' and 'lifestyle', Climate activism and transitioning are both sides of the same coin. We may even understand the Climate Movement to contain or broadly intersect the Transition Towns

Movement. However by having alternative attractors in Peak Oil and Climate Change, this movement can attract different networks under its own flag, which will then evolve differently together. The Transition Towns Movement has its own web, with its own centre or strategist-designer hub, and its own web maker in Rob Hopkins.

Subversion can take different forms, and so groups that focus on lifestyle may be thus protesting their disapproval of a consumerist society. Similarly although the Climate Camp is a camp for direct action, it clearly presents or introduces to new activists an experimental model of living. Consensus decision making and Permaculture design constitute shared standards among the various networks that help extend these networks and further circulate ideas and practices.

CHAPTER 5

THE FAITH NETWORKS

In this chapter I profile the faith networks I have researched making use of my theoretical model for networks, and describe my own participation with them. The faith networks will be described against the backdrop of the Climate and Transition Movements, which I examined in the previous chapter. In the following sections I will describe: Isaiah 58, Christian Ecology Link, GreenSpirit and London Islamic for the Environment/ Wisdom in Nature.

The Faith Networks: Between Attractors

The Abrahamic faith networks that have participated in my research are: Isaiah 58, Christian Ecology Link (CEL), GreenSpirit and London Islamic Network for the Environment (LINE)/ Wisdom in Nature (WIN). All these networks are part of the Climate Movement and also they are involved in an internal eco-missionary outreach campaign, trying to raise awareness in their own churches and mosques about Climate Change, or to build bridges between their own communities and the Climate Movement. In addition, with the exception of Isaiah 58, they are all involved at different levels in the Transition Towns Movement – which, as I explained in the previous chapter, is a movement predicated on lifestyle and sustainable communities rather than protest.

Christian Ecology Link (CEL) and London Islamic Network for the Environment (LINE) ended up becoming my main sources, although I did strive to collect data from all four networks. However, Isaiah 58 is a Christian anarchist network centred on protest and not always open to researchers. GreenSpirit has a different ethos, mainly focused on lifestyle, yet I found it difficult to get past gate keepers in group events. Thus, although I have interviewed individual GreenSpirit members, I do not have any ‘group data’. I should add that although I had come across these networks independently, I soon realised that they were all loosely connected. There have been, for

instance, inter-faith events between LINE and CEL, such as a three day eco-retreat. This can be partly looked at as following the more mainstream trend towards inter-faith dialogue between Christians and Muslims and partly as the more organic types of linkages that are established between networks that partake in movements of social and personal transformation (see Gerlach & Hine, 1968, quoted in York, 1995: 326).

Since 2007, when I began my research, the field has experienced some rapid and profound changes. We can for instance talk of a pre-Copenhagen and post-Copenhagen Climate Movement, as the summit has undoubtedly shifted its political scope. Permaculture, the 'international lingua franca among Green people' (Schwarz & Schwarz, 1998: 144) found a concrete mode of proliferation in the Transition Towns Movement. The faith groups themselves have changed with the times and adopted much of the general emphasis on Permaculture and community building in some cases, and have undergone some radical transformations, as it is the case with the London Islamic Network for the Environment, which has since changed its name to Wisdom in Nature (2010).

I will now proceed to offer a profile for each of the four networks, as evidenced from my primary data which was collected through interviews and participant observation in private gatherings (such as retreats) and public events (such as conferences and open forums) as well as secondary data that comes from various publications (leaflets, booklets, magazines and websites).

Isaiah 58

At the time my research started Isaiah 58 was a small network of Christians, mostly Christian Anarchists, coordinated mainly by a young activist who was the very first person I made contact with. There is little available secondary literature on Christian Anarchism and so I am basing this section mainly on the interviews I carried out at the 2008 Climate Camp and one subsequent event. The group did not have any official literature and their activities were not made public. Recent research on other Christian Anarchist groups in mainland Australia (Douglas, 2009) provides a

similar account of the difficulty of approaching and maintaining contact with activists, who often wish to keep their activities covert.

It is often the case that activists will be involved in more than one network and so membership of one organisation is not necessarily continuous or permanent. By the end of 2009 it seemed like the network had almost entirely dissolved, as members had drifted their involvement with other bigger Christian organisations (Christian Aid, Speak, Student Christian Movement). It is possible that the network has since resurrected. Having a rather clandestine presence, the network always functioned in bursts of activity. This peak and troughs pattern accords well with what Climate activists call being 'burnt out' after attempting to take on too much responsibility. My last failed attempt to join the group during the G20 protest camp in London 2009 was only followed by individual interviews with two members of the group.

Christian Anarchism has as a key text Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1894), and draws from a multitude of other texts that deal with nonviolent resistance, inspired by such figures as Ghandi and Martin Luther King. My first contact with Isaiah 58 was in August 2008, prior to the Kingsnorth Climate Camp. I was invited by their leader to join them in London, a day before the camp started and then travel together to Kent. I spent the night in their headquarters – a squat in a Victorian building in London that was incredibly well looked after and carefully organised. A vast library occupying much of the first floor teemed with books on Christian Pacifism and it came as no surprise that the I58 leader had recently graduated in Peace Studies. There were recycling instructions dotted everywhere around the building, little historical accounts on the buildings' previous incarnations and a functional, clearly maintained rota for all the groups and individuals using the building.

All these made me reconsider my assumptions on what a 'squatted' building may look like. I was told that the rest of the group was going to join at the camp. Not everyone present had known each other prior to the Climate Camp, and the degrees of separation among members were often quite wide: some had met randomly at a conference publicised on the internet and announced their participation at the last minute, whilst others were connected by more established friendships.

For Christian Anarchists, Jesus represents ‘the first activist’ yet they reject leadership in the traditional way, as Anarchism is obviously based on the dissolution of power structures. The name Isaiah 58 was chosen because, as activists explained, the biblical passage invites the believer to direct action (see Glossary):

Shout it aloud, do not hold back/ Raise your voice like a trumpet/ Declare to my people their rebellion (Isaiah, 58).

One of the Christian activists I interviewed at Climate Camp told me:

Peter: I call myself a Christian Anarchist because just Christian carries less information about who I am. I also recently got involved in the International Healing Movement, which is just another way of working with Jesus basically to make your life better.

Maria: When did you become a Christian Anarchist?

Peter: I always was a Christian Anarchist I think but it wasn’t until I went to university and somebody told me ‘you can be both’ [Christian and Anarchist] and I read that book by Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, that I thought ‘actually that makes more sense than anything else I heard’. So I actually had the belief inside me, but it wasn’t until I heard that other people believed that, that I actually thought ‘Oh, yeah, I can actually believe that as well’.

This is perhaps a clear example of how the process of frame extension discussed in Chapter 3 works to literally ‘extend’ belief in a particular direction. This informant told me that he always was a Christian Anarchist, which means that he perceived Tolstoy’s text, which he read when he went to university and the discussions he had with fellow Christian Anarchists, to be matching his existing Christian beliefs. This is not necessarily because Christian and Anarchism were in perfect harmony, even though they may be. For the process of frame extension to be successful, there needs to be common ground, and a harmonious translation of new beliefs at the beginning. However, eventually the new beliefs were accepted by Peter because ‘this made *more* sense than anything else I heard’ [my emphasis], and thus by making ‘more sense’, it would have extended

his own beliefs in a different direction. Jesus may represent the basic, square one of his beliefs, when we consider processes of frame extension or a chronic cue if we apply the socio-cognitive model of transference (see Chapter 3). For example he saw his own participation in the International Healing Movement as being 'just another way of working with Jesus basically to make your life better'.

A Christian Anarchist also told me that 'If Jesus was around, he would have been at the camp'. At Kingsnorth, the very basic lifestyle, the tent and the hay bales, resonated in a way with biblical times, and some of the Christians I interviewed made a parallel between Jesus' lifestyle and the rustic life of the Climate Camp. Although I was only ten years their senior, their youth and enthusiasm would often wear me out, as I could not easily keep up with the volume of energy and hard work they all seemed so capable of deploying. I assumed that the verve of their religious, political and ecological ideology and convictions was mainly responsible for their constant desire to exert themselves further. On a personal level, a search for acceptance and appreciation, a desire to emulate Jesus' commitment and abnegation may also be responsible for the tolerance they all showed for working happily in hard conditions, like being cold, wet and sleep-deprived.

During the camp the I58 group consisted of about twenty young activists, many of these having joined on an ad-hoc basis. The core group could be thought to number less than half that number. During my nine days with I58 I got to interview almost all the group there and despite the fact that I was later denied participation, the group supplied me with a solid sample of data, as I could participate, observe and interview at leisure. Isaiah 58 was providing a cafe at the camp and so people often stopped to chat. I had the time to ask all my questions and there was always somebody willing to talk whilst we made coffee, fixed the tent or kept the rocket stoves going.

The evenings always ended with collective worship in the Christian tent (see Fig. 7 below), and on the last day the group had an ordained vicar (who happened to be the organiser's mother) officiate and give communion. On previous occasions members offered communion to each other. This is a common practice among the Green Christians I have encountered through my participation with Christian Ecology Link. The practice of giving communion differs greatly among Christian denominations, and for some denominations in the Protestant tradition this is

more of a symbolic act, lacking formality and sacramental reverence. However it can be suggested that being both giver and receiver of communion enables Green Christians to experiment with a horizontal organisation, opposed to the traditional hierarchical administration that is reflected in the practice of receiving communion from a priest.



Fig. 7 Evening service in the Christian tent, Kingsnorth 2008

The contents of worship chosen for each night was planned in advance by a few members and informally agreed by the leader. Often printouts of the main prayers and Taizé songs would be given out to participants before the night service started. Taizé songs were very popular among the group and, albeit unrelated, one participant had only arrived at the camp after a long retreat (three months) with a Taizé community in France, a monastic Christian community who focuses on peace and reconciliation. Open/free prayer would normally end the service. The content of the ‘free prayer’ was very much in line with the rhetoric of the whole service: praying for activists at the gates, asserting personal and collective disapproval with the corporations and politicians responsible for the ecological crisis, praying for people affected by Climate Change in poor countries, for the camp, and so on.

Some of the Christian activists at Climate Camp, fully-fledged I58 members in particular, had a strong desire to identify as Christians in the larger context of the camp. At the same time they

were all, like the rest of the campers, strong believers in Direct Action as the most efficacious measure to act on Climate Change. Their commitment to Direct Action made this group most aligned with the Climate Camp ethos, although they remained a somewhat separate entity within the camp. They often pointed out to other fellow activists that they were ‘a bunch of Christians’ and demarcated their identity during collective events by carrying banners, and on one occasion a cross. The cross created some debate within the camp as to whether such divisions were welcomed on one hand, and on the other, it raised questions around the religious freedom various groups could enjoy and the religious plurality the movement could assert during public, jointly held, events.

The varying pressure of the ‘anti-groups’ on the Christian group were often felt internally by the group as a whole and also by individual activists. One activist told me in an interview following an event where the Christian group had prayed at the gates of Kingsnorth (separated from the rest of the non-religious activists):

I felt quite self-conscious, because I am not usually one of the Christians who is in a group of Christians, being ostentatiously Christian, at something like that.

This activist demarcated herself from the other Christians because she felt self conscious rather than comfortable in the group or with the group identity. The participants had taken part in a ritual at the gates of Kingsnorth power station. The group had asserted their Christian identity and in this instance they prayed at the same time as the other Climate activists were taking turns to give speeches.

One workshop held at the Kingsnorth Climate Camp, entitled ‘Climate and Religion’, had secular and religious activists debating on whether there was a space for religion in the fight against Climate Change. One participant from the secular corner vehemently condemned the Christian Church for its inaction on Climate Change. He ended by asking the Christian activists present: ‘How much more homophobic and unjust can we allow the Christian Church to become?’ One of the Christian activists, who was only loosely associated with I58, offered a personal apology on behalf of the Church. Yet most I58 members would not have spoken on behalf of the

Church. Seeing themselves as anti-establishment, they often articulated, during interviews, personal stories of how they arrived at their spiritual and religious beliefs, independent of the Church, parents or role-models.

Christian Ecology Link

I began my research of the Christian Ecology Link in 2007 and in the introduction to this thesis I already provided my reflections of the first day with CEL members at the Global Day of Action. CEL is a national, ecumenical Christian network. The core members of the Christian Ecology Link (about fifteen members) form the Steering Committee. These members are the ones I have interviewed and met more often. The larger network is made up of about a hundred active members nationally and there are bi-annual events that tend to bring them together. *The Green Christian* (CEL's bi-monthly publication) readers are numerous (over a thousand) but it is unclear to me if all those who subscribe to the magazine can be considered members of the network.

In its own words, Christian Ecology Link is:

an interdenominational UK Christian organisation for people concerned about the environment. It offers insights into ecology and the environment to Christian people and churches and offers Christian insights to the Green Movement (Green Christian, Spring, 2010).

During the past twenty five years CEL has been in operation, the network has followed the different foci of the environmental movement: nuclear power, GM foods, road protests, and more recently Climate Change. One informant told me that he understood CEL to be mostly 'about the friendships' that have become established over time. Perhaps because there are strong bonds of friendship already in existence, the network is not recruiting many new members. During collective events there is often a tangible family atmosphere, with home cooked food, poetry, storytelling and shared memories.

As a 'link', Christian Ecology Link sees itself as a support network for Christians who wish to involve themselves in ecological activities in a Christian context. They also see themselves as a link between Christians and the larger (secular or rather multi-denominational) Green Movement. Yet CEL's impact on the bigger Christian community is not at present what the network would desire it to be. One key member told me that although she wished CEL was more responsible for the greening of the Church, this was most probably connected with the secular trend toward 'green' rather than their ongoing efforts. Members often shared their frustration over the lack of ecological concerns in their own churches and many told me that they came to events as they felt rejuvenated by meeting other like-minded Christians and inspired to return to their own churches with renewed energy.

CEL would perhaps not wish to come across as a reformist Christian organisation, and because of its charity status, there are constraints on how political the organisation can become. In contrast with Isaiah 58, CEL members would not so vehemently oppose politicians, but 'pray' for them to make the right decisions for instance. Although many CEL members would perhaps happily endorse direct action (see *Green Christian*, Issue 67, 2009), and a few do participate in direct action events, most focus on community building as the means for fighting Climate Change. Its recent links with the Transition Towns Movement which will be discussed in following chapters, fit in well with its desire to maintain a certain distance from the political sphere, or rather operate within its limits, whilst still exerting influence and creating opportunities for change at a bigger level.

In 2008 Christian Ecology Link launched a programme called 'ecocell' - 'a journey in practical discipleship for the 21st century'. The journey is one of 'sustainability, to getting back to living within the limits of the resources available on earth, and of the earth's capacity to absorb our waste products'. (Emerson, *Green Christian*, 2009: 5) Green Christians who wish to start an ecocell can obtain electronic resources and other materials from CEL and also promote it in their churches. The seven modules that make up the programme progressively introduce one to green living, regarding shopping, energy use, travel, and also accompany these changes with relevant

prayers, poems and stories - 'both to make you reflect on what it all means and also to inspire you to action' (ibid.).

Ecocell is perhaps a good start for understanding the aspirations and ethos of the Christian Ecology Link network. I interviewed one of the main designers of the ecocell programme and he told me that ecocell was taking environmentalism and ecology one step further than other programmes, aiming to get 'the fruit on the high branches', that was sweeter although it required more effort. He contrasted these efforts with Transition Towns, saying:

Terry: Transition Town, as it stands at the moment, is almost literally at the low hanging fruit [meaning not aiming to be radical enough]. You know growing things locally, that is absolutely great to grow things locally, or the better organised ones will be talking about how to insulate your house and things like that, but they are not taking into account the fact that we should be doing a carbon footprint audit. So it's not saying 'don't fly' or 'only fly under certain conditions'; it doesn't think like that, it doesn't think of restriction, it's in a kind of a libertarian culture of the 80s. It doesn't say that that libertarian culture doesn't respect the laws of nature. And it's not saying 'obey laws', so I think it is more in a Christian organisation that is saying: 'now, those are laws that we have to obey'. Now I think we have to think about what kind of more reflective and a more solid influence we can be [as opposed to other networks]. What we have in a lot of these local organisations is a lot of young middle class people who do a lot of very good things locally but who take two or three long hall flights a year, and you know, it's just inconsistent (Interview with Terry E., 2010).

Here Terry explained how radical CEL is in comparison with other networks, because of the emphasis on the individual contribution. The audit is something that encourages participants to take their personal carbon footprint into account, to apply themselves, personally, to the social transformation they envisage. He also talks about what other people of faith mentioned in interviews as an advantage, because they were already familiar with personal 'restrictions' through their involvement in their faith. Like I already discussed in Chapter 1, the understanding of that relationship between personal cost and future benefits or personal cost and compensators, constitutes a similarity between environmentalism and religion.

CEL's spiritual resources are diverse and, as an interdenominational network, members are accepting of each others' idiosyncratic understanding and interpretation of Christianity. Hence some members with proclivities towards Celtic Christianity can contribute poetry and prose from this niche, whilst others, less receptive to the poetic and artistic dimension, may simply offer anecdotes, scientific and sociological literature on environmentalism and Climate Change, in a symbiotic exchange. Green issues are often offered to members as open to debate, such as vegan food for instance – where the ethics of a green diet are discussed from more than one environmental perspective (vegan, vegetarian, meat eating).



Fig 8. CEL members, praying through painting, Suffolk 2009.

In terms of practice, CEL holds public conferences, forums, collective worships (often ahead of main green events), private retreats and closed steering committee meetings (that are only open to members). When events are held in church halls, the content and form of worship tend to be more traditional, to accord with the wider community which may be attending. During private retreats members experiment with newer, less conventional, forms of worship, such as praying through painting, offering communion to each other, experimental ecological rituals,

contemplating and praying outdoors. I will elaborate on their practices further in the chapters concerned with ecological ritual (Chapter 8 and 9).

As a Christian ecological network, CEL is the only one nationally that has recently focussed all its attention on Climate Change and, in early 2000, has launched the Operation Noah campaign. As the name suggests Operation Noah makes a parallel between the biblical flood and Climate Change. Membership is dual, yet Operation Noah has in time become a separate organisation that is currently fighting to get charity status so that it can become completely independent from CEL, and be able to sustain itself financially. In the course of my research Operation Noah has changed its ethos, and has moved from protest against the government to education (and particularly educating young people), yet it has passionately maintained its focus on fighting Climate Change. Some CEL members will be participating in protest activities yet the focus of this organisation is sustainable lifestyle and personal transformation, aiming towards a Christian eco-reformation.

GreenSpirit

GreenSpirit is also part of this plural movement of eco-reformists. GreenSpirit is a national network, with members across the UK, and represents the British counterpart of the world wide Creation Spirituality Network. The name GreenSpirit was initially given to the journal of the Association for the Creation Spirituality in London. Creation Spirituality, in an eco-theological context, saw its beginnings in the 1980s writings and teachings of Mathew Fox (b.1940), an American Episcopalian priest. Formerly, Fox had been a Catholic priest of the Dominican order, from which he was expelled in 1993, following his reformist teachings.

As a set of teachings and practices, Creation Spirituality has established over the past three decades a diverse representation and influence inside the milieu of Western religious environmentalism. Presently Creation Spirituality can be identified as an Anglophone movement made up of individuals, local groups and national networks, such as GreenSpirit in the United Kingdom and Creation Spirituality in the United States, Canada and Australia. Apart from Mathew

Fox, other major influences on the movement are eco-theologian Thomas Berry (1914-2009), cosmologist Brian Swimme (b.1950) and environmental activist and writer Joanna Macy (b.1929).

Mathew Fox introduced Creation Spirituality as a recovered or rediscovered tradition with origins in Christian-Catholic mysticism. Using historical and literary examples Fox illustrated what he perceived as an unnoticed schism inside Western spirituality. Thus Fox contrasts the earlier, suppressed, and subsequently latent, Creation Spirituality, with what became in the West the dominant 'Fall/ Redemption model of Spirituality' (Fox, 2000 [1983]: 11). This latter is patriarchal, passionless, anthropocentric and pessimistic, whilst the former is predicated on life and celebration. According to Fox, Creation Spirituality was amorphously preserved in a diversity of texts as well as through the lived experience of many, from the first author of the Hebrew Bible to the writings of Meister Eckhart (1260-1329), and it is still enduring through present day ecologists, artists, feminists and liberation theologians. Fox controversially opposed the concept of 'original sin' of the Fall/Redemption paradigm, to what he considered to be the authentic and lost wisdom of 'original blessing'.

In accordance with its ecumenical vision, Creation Spirituality desires to reform Christianity by incorporating Eastern and Indigenous spiritualities as well as newly available scientific knowledge of the universe and planet earth, celebrating the divine present in all things (pantheism). Practices are diverse, from Native American *sweatlodge* ceremonies to celebrating the geological story of the Earth in new rituals, such as the Cosmic Walk. Some scholarly criticism contends that Creation Spirituality ultimately distances Christians from environmentalism because of its extreme reformulation, using Christian language yet drawing exclusively on science, process philosophy, ecology and Native American spirituality (Keen, 2002: 25-7). It is, however, important to differentiate Creation Spirituality as a body of text and teachings on one hand, from Creation Spirituality as an eco-religious movement on the other.

Being part of a movement that peaked in the 1970s on both sides of the Atlantic, GreenSpirit members tend to be, as it may be expected, older. Much like CEL, GreenSpirit is not necessarily a growing network, and members are not exclusively involved in GreenSpirit. The GreenSpirit members I interviewed were not always happy to be identified as Christians although some were

frequent church goers. Two of them, whom I interviewed in their home in Lancaster, were involved in a local Deep Ecology group as well as their local church. They saw their involvement with Deep Ecology as separate from the weekly Sunday mass they attended, as they could not harmonise the two. One informant explained that the farming community he was part of would not be able to adopt Deep Ecology without changing their very existence – as animal farming would undoubtedly be in conflict with Deep Ecology principles. Yet as his community of place was Christian it made sense for him to continue going to the Sunday service. Some other GreenSpirit members, who invited me to their homes in Totnes, attended a monthly Christian Service that had an ecological emphasis in a nearby village. I joined them on one such occasion and I had the opportunity to meet another small group (four or five) of GreenSpirit members. Although I made a few more contacts through the Internet I was not successful in taking part in any GreenSpirit events.

A GreenSpirit member and transitioner from Totnes took me with her for a visit to her local church as she wished to show me a huge oak tree in the church court yard, that had been split in two by lightning but was still very much alive and flourishing. We spent some time with the tree and she was visibly emotionally moved, as we stood there in silence and reverence. Afterwards we entered the church building and she talked about the removal of the original pews and the handiness of the mobile chairs that had replaced them. The contrast between her attitude outside, in the presence of the tree and her matter-of-fact presentation of the church building, is I think very representative for GreenSpirit Christians more widely. Almost all GreenSpirit members I interviewed expressed a deep affinity with nature, often as the root of their connection with GreenSpirit.

My data showed that GreenSpirit members are somewhat divided on the North – South pole. The GreenSpirit members in and around London are often academics and their pursuits are more scientific. The two members from Lancaster expressed their own reluctance to join in with members from London or the South, mainly because of status differences. All the informants from Totnes were Totnesians before being anything else. A Totnes pride is clearly apparent in almost all interviews with GreenSpirit members. Jill, a transitioner from Totnes, explained:

We have a sense of community here in Totnes. It's the axis you see, in town we all have a tradition of going there on a Friday. Often I don't need to get anything but I am just going to see whom I will see. It's the networking. And of course we have Schumacher College. [Somebody] told me 'Totnes think that they got it all right'; [responds emphatically] 'Well people are trying to do things in Totnes'.

Therefore although GreenSpirit is an intellectual community, the members are involved in their own local communities and many have more practical agendas for the more spiritual and scientific aspirations of the larger organisations. For example the consciousness café held monthly in Totnes by a professor of Psychology from London was described by Jill thus: 'We have a speaker each time, but you get to come together as a community'.

Since Mathew Fox's original vision, nearly thirty years ago, the Creation Spirituality movement has changed and transformed in visible ways. As a British network, GreenSpirit has recently become more distanced from the religious sphere, than it would have been a decade ago. There is little mention now of 'insights from major religions and traditional cultures' (GreenSpirit, Spring 1999) or indeed many contributions from ecotheologians. The early 1990s journals often contained contributions from Mathew Fox, Thomas Berry and others, advocating Fox's creation-centred model for Christianity.

The current aims of GreenSpirit, as outlined in a recent journal publication (2010) are:

GreenSpirit is in search of an authentic spirituality for our time, asking deep questions about the human spirit and its true relationship with the planet. GreenSpirit challenges us to: honour the web of life, perceive the total interconnectedness of the cosmos and recognise its oneness [...]; honour diversity, affirm differences and value voices from the margin, to value women's wisdom, and the prophetic voice of the artist and the poet, and let go of the compulsion to dominate and control [...]; behold Nature as a great teacher and the revelation of the divine and to replace the anthropocentric worldview with an ecocentric one; walk ever more lightly on the Earth (GreenSpirit, 2010) .

The official voice of the network expressed here resounds clearly with the Creation Spirituality original platform, yet the emphasis on drawing wisdom from ‘traditional cultures and religions’ is no longer there. Instead we find an animistic theosophy and a search for ‘authentic spirituality’ or even a ‘Global Green Spirituality’ (Mowll, 2010: 5-7). During interviews informants described this search for ‘an authentic spirituality for our time’ in different ways. Some GreenSpirit cells are more concerned with an intellectual seeking, attending conferences on Ecopsychology, hosting a monthly ‘Consciousness Café’ or organising seminars on the purpose and functions of ritual. As most members have a scientific training or academic background, this format is one that feels very familiar to them. Other groups are more oriented towards an experiential dimension, going on eco-retreats, celebrating the solstices, or such rituals as ‘The Cosmic Walk’ and ‘The Council of All Beings’ (see Appendix 1).

GreenSpirit, as a network, is not strongly connected with the Climate Movement although Climate Change is a prime concern. Individual connections create the capillary influx to and from the larger field. A few of the GreenSpirit members I interviewed were involved in their local Transition Towns initiative, contributing to the Heart and Soul groups. In one case, an informant was in the process of starting a local Transition group in his native London district. Some local groups participate in national climate events, such as The Global Day of Action. Most of these links and contributions are not expressly encouraged or publicised by the GreenSpirit network; these are, it seems, organic links within the wider Green Movement. Members sometimes distinguished their intellectual or spiritual affiliation to GreenSpirit from their other more active and local involvements.

London Islamic Network for the Environment/ Wisdom in Nature

The London Islamic Network for the Environment/ Wisdom in Nature is a small network of Muslim activists in London and, more recently, Brighton. LINE/WIN became established in 2004 and, since its beginnings, the network has maintained a small core of activists at its centre, whilst having a more transient following and guest contributions. In 2005 they began organising protest

events, such as the successfully publicised 'Get Serious on Climate!' (where activists protested in London wearing diving suits to remind the public of the raising sea level), and continued with monthly open forums where Muslims and non-Muslims were invited to share their concerns about Climate Change and learn more about Islam and Ecology. The network has a stall at most Climate events and they have organised numerous green events around London, providing discussions, performances (poetry, music and drama), food sharing and so on. The core group is formed of four/five committed members but the larger network is of course difficult to pin down, as the website and monthly newsletter/email is available to a larger number of subscribers.

I started attending the forums in January 2008 and have witnessed how the group has increasingly shifted its emphasis from protest to lifestyle, and has become more involved with Transition Towns and Permaculture. The forums were attended by anything between five and twenty people, and they always took place on Sundays. During the forums there was a short time for prayer at the beginning and end, with a recitation from the Qur'an followed by silent reflection. Commonly the group would read a chosen passage from the Qur'an and discuss the ecological implications or reflect on their personal understanding of it. Progressively the texts offered for reflection became more focussed on Green economy, yet the structure of the forums stayed the same.

The venues were commonly public buildings that had Christian or Muslim affiliations, or in the case of closed meetings, the organisers' own homes. Even though meetings were sometimes conducted in such domestic settings they were always formal and rigorous. If GreenSpirit members organised many of their events in an academic style (conferences, seminars) in conformity with their most familiar settings, LINE/ WIN meetings often took the form of study groups or business meetings, as some of the organisers were students and young professionals. During forums a facilitator would take down main points on a flipchart and later compound minutes and action points.

All the meetings and all decisions were conducted according to consensus rules, and members took turns to facilitate meetings. Some meetings were all about facilitation, as if

participants were bringing the Climate Camp in their living rooms, they simply took turns to experiment with this. In one of the close meetings the facilitator explained:

Trying to decide a lot of things in a short space of time [...] it may be more practical just to understand the issues or organise them. So we're probably not going to decide very much today but there are also things you cannot measure, like coming together as a group (Close Meeting with LINE/WIN, 2010).

Consensus may be considered in fact less of a tool for making decisions, and more of a tool for personal empowerment and group cohesion.

The network is keen to establish links with Muslims and non-Muslims, and sees itself as transformative, rather than static or having solid boundaries on participation and rules. In an interview I asked if LINE's emphasis was the environment or ecology and my interviewee told me: 'Not really, it's an Islamic organisation, and Islam is about everything, all the connections'. Another member told me that LINE is 'not everyone's cup of tea' as it is a form of 'contemplative activism': 'This is a place of reflection [...] we end up doing too much and we need time to ponder, space to think rather than do'.

The emphasis is always on dialogue and process, a characteristic of many faith and inter-faith based environmental initiatives. Annual events, such as 'Fast for the Planet', demonstrate that LINE/WIN is searching for a deeper ecological or environmental practice that can provide climate activists with a spiritual, contemplative or reflective dimension. Like CEL, LINE/ WIN also provide educational resources on Climate Change for mosques and Islamic centres as well as non Islamic institutions (universities, environmental organisations) and in 2010 they published a booklet entitled 'Islam and Climate: A Call to Heal' (2010) which summarises the network's approach to ecology and the environmental crisis. Thus LINE/WIN wishes to encourage others to respond to the climate challenge in a personal way and also as a community, through the wisdom and spiritual depth contained by the Islamic tradition.



Fig. 9 LINE/WIN stand at the 6 Billion Ways conference, London 2010

The process of harmonising Islamic precepts and Climate Change ethics is similar to Christian eco-theological efforts. Some of the resources offered by LINE/ WIN looks at Islamic scholarship, and addresses popular Climate Change developing ethics on population control, consumption, economics, and so on. Their resources may at times appear more conservative or traditional in their outlook in comparison to the general group ethos that emerges during meetings. For example the notion of guardianship or *khilafah* is advanced in resources that take the form of scholarly articles, suggesting a stewardship model of ecological awareness (Khalid, 1996: 2; Hussain, 2004: 5). However their change of name in 2010 from London Islamic Network for the Environment to Wisdom in Nature, was partly explained during a closed forum as a mode of getting away from the term 'environment' and its anthropocentric implications.

LINE/ WIN proved to be the most involved faith group in the Climate and Transition Movements. Muzammal Hussein, the Chair of LINE/ WIN addressed the Campaign Against Climate Change at the London Rally for the Global Day of Action 2008 with these words:

I can only begin by sharing my appreciation for the Campaign Against Climate Change [...] you have been an inspiration to us, to the London Islamic Network for the Environment,

allowing us a vehicle to express our passion, our anger and our hope. And you've also facilitated our networking into the wider movement. So thank you, the Campaign Against Climate Change!

He went on to share two challenges faiths faced in today's world:

The first is a question of relevance; faiths have historically been crucial in instances of transformation, in history, and there's a danger of faiths losing their relevance but becoming just a set of rituals.

The second challenge was capitalism, 'dressing up' as both Green and religious. We can note in this speech how the speaker demarcates himself against other faiths (his included) that are not doing what they are historically meant to be doing: assist as vehicles for transformation. This is a framing exercise – our grievances are your grievances – and a means of standing on the same side as his audience, who are also most likely to think that there is a question of relevance surrounding faiths in today's world (my survey data shows that half of the climate activists who responded identified as 'not religious' - see Appendix 8). The speaker also tells his audience what his faith could do, which is to help with transformation. Again the speaker places himself on the same side as the Greens by identifying a common enemy: capitalism. This constant challenge for my informants to stand between their faith traditions and the secularism of the Climate and Transition movements is an important finding in my thesis and following chapters will look at the issue of green faith and identity in more depth.

Like other faith networks, LINE/ WIN sees as its most valuable asset, its transformative tools. An important annual event for the group, *Fast for the Planet: A Transformative Approach to Caring for the Earth*, provides a snapshot of the LINE/ WIN's core principles and values:

Fast for the Planet: A concept that recognises the essential need for personal, community and economic transformation in engaging with the ecological challenge. It includes the use of fasting and attempts to engage people with their hearts, minds and bodies.

More so the Fast for the Planet leaflet explains that through fasting it is possible to move away from certain damaging behaviours and attitudes, such as corporate domination, consumerism and dependence on fossil fuels, and move towards 'more wholesome alternatives', such as 'simplicity, sharing and community building', 'non-polluting energy' and 'sustainable use of the earths' resources'.

Many similar events organised by LINE/ WIN strive to create community and the links with the Transition Town Movement are very strong. In the excerpt above we can see a faithful reflection of the Transition Towns aim to be 'an evolving exploration into the head, hearts and hands of energy descent'.

LINE/WIN members' links with local mosques were somewhat limited. Just like Green Christians, Green Muslims encounter the same separation between their religious affiliation and their green concerns. There were ongoing attempts to introduce LINE/WIN to mosque officials. Two LINE/WIN activists had been allowed to create a community garden in their local mosque, and this project was seen as a great opportunity to educate the community about Permaculture principles in practical ways and provide a more hands on project for the network. Another member was involved in a community gardening project which also gave her the opportunity to experiment with guerrilla gardening techniques that are well established as a form of protest and artistic expression within the larger Green Movement.

One dimension in this network which was less represented, in contrast with the other three networks I looked at, was the experiential, ritualistic dimension. There were of course opportunities for collective reflection, and fasting for the planet is a good example of such an experimental practice. Islamic prayer was normally quietly interspaced during workshops and other events. I can only assume that in this context activists prayed according to Islamic praxis. My observations were that the male members would pray slightly before or after the female members but as this seemed to be a private part of the evenings, I never asked for more details on what was customary for the group. My reserve was partly to do with the fact that the group itself seemed to keep the prayer away from the non-Muslim members. We were encouraged to have coffee and tea in the hall or the kitchen and so to me it seemed like prayer was happening 'at break time'. Whilst

Christian groups easily assumed that everyone present would wish to join in with prayers, the Muslim informants were, as it may be expected in a British context, more aware of their separate identity as Muslims.

Finally an experiential dimension of the greening of Islam that seems to be common among Muslim activists is involvement in joint gardening community projects with local mosques. As Gilliat-Ray and Bryant (2011) write, much of this greening has taken place through establishing gardening projects associated with mosques. While they argued that participating in such projects encouraged 'a new sense of agency, belonging and ownership of local spaces' (2011: 284), my own research suggests that Green Muslims, just like Green Christians, were not particularly successful at getting their environmental message across to the mainstream of their respective institutions. Hence gardening in their local mosque was actually an indirect (and spatially peripheral) way of drawing attention to environmental issues in a practical way rather than by preaching this message to religious officialdom.

Conclusions

The four networks profiled here are all very different. Some come from different faith traditions (Christianity and Islam), but even the three Christian networks are acutely separated by the ideologies that influence them, like for instance Christian Pacifism as opposed to Creation Spirituality. Moreover there are wide variances between the time scale they have been in operation (from decades to just a couple of years – at the time of my fieldwork), their membership size, ethos, resources, and so on. Yet despite these differences they are also connected by a cross-fertilising climate discourse.

All four networks are part of the Climate Movement or connected with it in different ways. On an axis representing activist involvement that has lifestyle/community building on one end and protest on the other, we can easily place Isaiah 58 at the protest extremity and GreenSpirit on the lifestyle end. Christian Ecology Link and London Islamic Network for the Environment/ Wisdom

in Nature, the main networks that have informed this research, would perhaps fit between these two polarities.

Both CEL and LINE/WIN offer ecological resources to churches and mosques, aiming to reach the wider Christian and Muslim community. The act of attempting to educate the officialdom and exert influence from the bottom to the top can be considered a claim to power, an anti-hierarchical statement. Whilst the Isaiah 58 and GreenSpirit networks are declaredly reformist, CEL and LINE/WIN attempt to walk the tightrope between their traditions and the Climate Movement by converging in part with their separate audiences (non-religious activists on one hand and faith communities on the other) and treading carefully on commonly held assumptions. In some cases a process of ad hoc demarcation ensues.

We may differentiate here between the collective/official voice of the network and the individual negotiations between their traditions and the newly acquired climate discourse, or between their faith identity on one hand and 'green' identity, on the other. At an individual level GreenSpirit members were not as detached from religious traditions as the network appears to be, based on its declared aims and publications. As I discussed above, some GreenSpirit members attended both Deep Ecology meetings and their local Sunday service, and they commented on the inherent conflicts of their dual affiliation. At both collective and individual level there is an ongoing negotiation (in varying degrees) between elements of the established faith tradition and elements imported from the current climate discourse. Events where a wider Christian community may be present or even in-group events that are held in church halls will have a more traditional character. Groups will experiment more freely when they are uninhibited by traditional factors, or find themselves in new settings.

In some cases Green Christians and Muslims will simply content themselves with introducing new 'green' practices to a degree that is likely to be accepted by the larger group, even if this may simply mean gardening in their local mosque. Even in situations where Green Christians find themselves safely isolated from traditional factors (for example in the Christian tent at Climate Camp) activists who shared communion/ gave communion to each other, ended up accepting communion from an ordained vicar when one joined their more experimental

congregation in support of her son. Considering the attractor model, these networks find themselves between two main attractors: that of their own church and that of the Climate network. As such they end up being the intersection of these two fields, which pull them into different directions. The next chapter will explore the issue of green faith in more depth and will also explore the identity conflicts that result from hybrid religious-secular networks, such as the Climate and Transition movements.

CHAPTER 6

GREEN FAITH: MERGING GREEN AND FAITH IDENTITIES

This chapter examines the processes of eco-reformation among Christian and Muslim climate activists and how they negotiated their faith and activist identities in the context of the Climate and Transition Movements. Bron Taylor's thesis (2010) on dark green religion claims that this designates spiritual practices oriented around biocentric, and not anthropocentric, ideas. This distinction might influence the degree to which institutionalised religions, especially Abrahamic religions, can absorb dark green characteristics. I will show in this chapter that the faith groups in my research adopt these dark green elements despite the opposition to institutionalised religion, as well as the conflicts inherent in their polythetic involvement in these groups and their faith/activist identities.

In the first section I will discuss the opposition to institutionalized religiosity in the Climate and Transition Movements. In the second section I will examine the identity conflict between activist and faith identities and posit that faith activists maintain a primary faith identity. In the third section I will look at how activists succeed in merging their green and faith identities. I will use the model of primary identity, which I have put forward in Chapter 3, to demonstrate this, looking particularly at tree imagery.

Attitudes towards Religion in the Climate and Transition Movements

The main attitude which non-religious climate activists have towards religion has already been set out from the results of my survey. The present section will investigate how the anarchic, anti-institutionalised religion attitude is present in these movements and how faith activists are impacted by it. My data show that many religious activists are aware of their marginal status and may even maintain a secret faith identity during collective events.

The results from the survey I conducted showed that half the respondents were not religious, with some stating in their answers that they were actually anti-religious. Moreover the survey indicated that in terms of solutions to combat Climate Change, activists seldom thought that religion could have an important impact or influence. The biocentrism of the Climate Movement in particular clearly comes to the fore in all its expressions. My data shows that in the general discourse of the Climate Movement, nature or the planet is opposed to the Judeo-Christian divine, creating a further divide between religious and secular activists, and I will end this section with a discussion of the planet's iconography in the Climate Movement.

My data suggested that the religious activists were well aware of this general attitude toward religion in the Climate Movement and the Green Movement more generally, an attitude which is perhaps present more widely in the contemporary secular and political ethos (see Chomsky, 2007). Many religious activists would also be aware of the influence and persistence of such eco-critical views, as those represented by Lynn White Jr. (1967), who notoriously blamed Christianity for the current crisis. Yet, as I will show in the following sections of the present chapter, these religious activists also partake in a collective activist identity, despite this almost implicit opposition to their faith identity. Thus the aim of this chapter is to show how they succeed (or did not succeed) in reconciling their opposing identities.

If we take Global Days of Action (2007 – 2010) to represent the main, collective manifestations of the Climate Movement, religion is well represented inside the movement. Many faith groups and organisations (Christian Aid, CAFOD, Eco Congregation, Student Christian Movement), alongside the ones I have researched, join the annual march. In 2010, secular activists, from the Campaign against Climate Change, held a joint vigil with Christian activists, and publicised their Church vigil on their website and literature. In contrast, Climate Camps are usually not open to religious representation. My survey data indicate that half of respondents (or more than half at the London camp) were atheists or not religious (see Appendix 8). This is reflected in the official position of the Camp for Climate Action.

This position evolved as a result of religious groups maintaining some autonomy inside the camp. If in 2008 my Christian informants were able to have a Christian Café on the camp (which

was also used for worship), in 2009 Climate Camp rules stated that religious groups could only take part as individuals/or in 'an unofficial capacity' and so not as a group of Christians. In fact no groups, political or religious, were allowed on camp, and this was perhaps a strategy for unity. Christian activists at the Kingsnorth Climate Camp were initially asked not to carry a cross on the day of direct action (9th August 2008), but after some discussions this was agreed/endorsed on the basis of plurality of religious expression within the campaign.

This anti-religious attitude is also congruent with the general anarchic ethos of the camp and the inspiration activists consistently take from other politically or religiously oppressed, such as the Diggers' Movement or the Levellers. In the camp's version of the Digger's Song (London, 2009) the attitude towards organised religion (as opposed to the Levellers' own religion) is explicitly conveyed:

They make the laws,

To chain us well,

The clergy dazzle us with heaven

Or they damn us into hell.

We will not worship

The god they serve... (The Digger's Song, London Climate Camp, 2009).

Climate Camps may have an hour scheduled every morning, before the start of talks and training sessions, for meditation and silent meetings. This may represent a built-in spiritual feature although at Kingsnorth I regularly saw no more than one or two people sitting in the tent designated for the morning silent meeting. Religion, spirituality and Climate Change are often discussed in workshops and informal settings but they do not have any official space in the camp. The Climate Camp for example has a 'wellbeing tent', which is perhaps as close as it comes to having a religious or spiritual place. The Climate Camp handbook explains:

The wellbeing place is somewhere to come and relax. We offer advice on sustainable activism and avoiding burnout, "emotional first aid" if needed and a quiet space to chill out and collect your thoughts.

Although I do not possess matching quantitative data for the Transition Towns Movement, qualitative data indicates a similar reserved and partly suspicious general attitude towards religious traditions and particularly Christianity as the dominant tradition in Britain. A Christian informant, Jorge, who is also very much involved in his local transition initiative, told me that his fellow transitioners knew that he was Christian and that was 'fine'.

There's two things there. The first thing is – I am personally involved with it locally and that's been going very well and I am very excited and they know I am a Christian – so that's fine, but the bigger question is how have we engaged as CEL with the Transition network? And I think we are in the early days of doing that, in fact I think that CEL and Eco-Congregation and A Rocha, who are the main three main organisations for Christians, are very much in the early days of speaking to Transition Towns.

We can see that although personally he felt accepted by his local transition initiative, he did not feel that CEL, as a Christian organisation, had been equally successful in communicating with the Transition Towns Movement. In a public CEL conference held in 2012, attendants were asked to remember when did they 'come out as Christians in the Green Movement' and when did they 'come out as Greens in their churches', which is a powerful metaphor of having a secret identity that is likely to be disapproved of by one's associates (perhaps even more so considering contemporary controversies regarding gay marriage in the Church). For this reason some activists prefer to remain closet Christians in their involvement with green initiatives and similarly closet environmentalists in their home church. In all of the few addresses transitioners made to Christian congregations that I personally witnessed they invariably (subtly) critically contrasted or opposed Christian preaching, dogma and exclusivity with Transition Towns' 'free for the taking', 'teaching by example', inclusive culture. This polarity may be influenced or re-enforced by other divisions, at political, generational and class level.

Since many Climate activists are involved in the Transition Towns Movement and vice versa, we can assume some similarity in religious attitudes. However Transition Towns have a much more visible outlet for religious and spiritual needs in their 'Heart and Soul' groups. The Heart and Soul is also a space for emotional wellbeing, just like the wellbeing tent in the Climate

Camp, but it has a declared spiritual function. Many of my informants (from faith groups) are or have been involved with their local Heart and Soul group, because they saw it as an opportunity to contribute their own spirituality and I will address this further in the next chapter concerned with spirituality (Chapter 7).

Activists coming from faith groups see some Deep Ecology-based spiritual practices as rootless or neutralised; ‘they are re-inventing the wheel’ a Muslim informant told me when talking about Deep Ecology. Yet however keen Christians and Muslims might be to supply ‘the more rooted’ wisdom of their particular traditions, climate and transition spirituality is by and large influenced by a mixture of Deep Ecology, ecopsychology and group psychotherapy (see Prentice 2008). For example the Heart and Soul in Totnes is mainly engaged in ecopsychology and it explains this on their TT website thus:

One of the most exciting initiatives happening as part of [Transition Town Totnes] is the Heart and Soul group who are exploring the psychology of change. Totnes has a relatively high therapist/counsellor per-square-metre ratio compared to other parts of the country, and the H&S [Heart and Soul] group ask the question, ‘how can the insights from these fields inform and support a community-scale energy descent process (Transition, 2007).

Hence the Heart and Soul here is preoccupied with the main interests and expertise of the participants: therapy and psychology. Some religious people get disappointed that their efforts to contribute a spirituality imbued with faith has not (yet) been successful.

In 2010 I interviewed one the main strategists of the Churches in Transition campaign, a Christian activist I called Jorge, and his reply reflects the disappointment he feels about how this is going. I divided his reply into three sections according to the central idea of what he was speaking about, and obtained three small sections: a) the aim or objective; b) the strategy and c) the result:

a) The aim or objective:

Maria: Could you please reflect on Churches in Transition?

Jorge: So I won’t talk about how it was set up, you know all that. The original objective was to enable Christians who were CEL members to get more involved in Transition and

share with each other their experiences. I am not sure how successful that's been, it's difficult to measure that success.

b) The strategy:

We decided to have a leaflet which basically described the theological underpinning and that's available, a very good leaflet and it's out there for who ever wants it – use it for stalls and so on. So that was successful. And we also decided to set up a discussion page to enable people to share experiences – and we did that – so that was successful. And we also subsequently developed a relation with Arosha and Eco-congregations because they said that many of their members are interested in this as well – so that's successful: we are going to be talking to them more about it and we are also be going to be talking to Transition Towns more about it.

c) The result:

But to enable people to talk to each other, I am not sure how successful that's been, I mean I look on the website [discussion page] it's hardly anything there.

We can see from this interview that Jorge is attempting to measure the success of Churches in Transition in two ways: through his efforts and also in respect to the results he had. First he talks about the efforts that were put into this project: the leaflet, the web page and the discussions with other Christian organisations. He punctuates each of these with 'and that was successful', meaning that the task was successfully completed. But the objective of this campaign was to enable Christians to talk to each other and in fact to make an important contribution to Transition Towns, to bring to it well developed communities that could already be taking on the objectives of the movement. He uses the word 'successful' five times in this excerpt, but ends his reply with 'it's hardly anything there'. This shows a huge discrepancy between efforts and results, which in some way is a reality in activism as it takes a disproportionate amount of effort to obtain results, and so efforts are celebrated instead of results.

During my three years in the field (2007 to 2010) a great deal changed in the collective discourse of the movement as well as the rhetoric of the groups and individuals I had been following. I witnessed the way faith groups integrated more of the climate discourse and also

adapted it in the process. For religious activists one problematic area of the climate discourse is represented by nature or the planet being oppressed by man, clearly exemplifying the biocentric vs. anthropocentric divide discussed above. Biocentric ethics are problematic because they clash with the main doctrine religious environmentalists may use, that of stewardship for God's creation. Clearly many of the religious activists in my research may be considered radical eco-reformists and so they were able to embrace somewhat the 'avenging Nature' discourse in the Climate Movement. Christian eco-evangelists would often ask their audience: 'Where was Man when God created the Earth?', clearly aiming to reverse any presupposed relationship of dominion between Man and the rest of creation.

In the Climate Movement the planet is often depicted as the oppressed avenger who can now claim its unrecognised power. These dichotomist narrations of 'Nature' or the planet as both oppressed and avenger were indeed very prevalent in Climate discourse. The two pictures below (fig. 10 and 11) were structures that could be considered Climate iconography, as they were present at all protest marches and demonstrations, as activists told me and I had observed myself. The first structure represents a literal depiction of the planet in a greenhouse, also suggestive of its oppressive incarceration: the planet is behind bars. In the second picture, two of the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, not only give a warning through an apocalyptic statement, but they also represent an agency of assuming or (re)claiming power.



Fig. 10 Planet in a greenhouse, Global Day of Action, London 2009



Fig. 11 Two of the four horsemen of the apocalypse, G20 protest march 2009

At the London Climate Camp in 2009, the motto of the camp was ‘Nature doesn’t do bailouts!’ – a statement which alludes to the opposition between nature and the divine: Nature does not do bailouts, does not forgive humanity or has any special relationship or covenant with humans. Humanity is not a favoured species for the planet and so it will be judged mercilessly for its transgressions (see also Lovelock, 1988b).

Given the explicit and implicit opposing attitudes towards religion in the Climate Movement the following section will discuss the identity conflicts experienced by activists, conflicts that result from this opposition.

Primary Faith Identities and Identity Conflicts

In Chapter 3 I defined my own model on faith identity. As the investigated literature pointed out, identity may be understood as a relational self-organising process, primarily constructed through emotions. I proposed that some identities, and often faith identities, represent the primary source or the most salient identity in the relational repertoire of identities, irrelevant of the temporary involvement in various group activities, and even though convictions and practices may align the individual in different directions. This is not necessarily the preferred identity but the one that is rooted deeper than the newer layers. External reminders of one’s primary identities may be

contained by the clothes activists wear and the language they use, like for example wearing jewellery that represents their faith and religious beliefs, such as a cross medallion for example, or even having a tattoo on one's body. The primary identity may be secret as participants may avoid to identify openly as Christians or Muslims for example.

The activist identity becomes in collective settings a shared relational identity. Whether a collective activist identity is a condition to political protest (Klandermas, 1992: 81) or protest itself creates the group identity (Teske, 1997: 122-23), it is safe to assume that identity and protest are related and they reinforce each other. Identifying common roots, a lineage or a common story is a way of building a common identity. I suggest that in some cases these do not have to be in place before the protest event, and neither do they have to be falsified. They can simply be selectively chosen and valorised as significant, not necessarily an act of manufacturing the past, but as some activists would see it, re-claiming power by creating a personal narrative. As an example, at the London Climate Camp in April 2009 one of the workshops asked those present to 'remember' the historical roots of the movement, by 'remembering' other expressions of resistance around the world and through time. People took turns to build an ad hoc timeline of events where communities, individuals or nations defeated their oppressors. This can be identified as having an emotional content as well as triggering feelings of empowerment and a desire to stand against injustice in a variety of contexts.

One concern in adopting this view of identity was that it might conflict with the premise of ANT theory, outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, as it seems to go against the 'in between' relational nature of the network or web actions. Yet the data suggests that the faith identity is deeply felt even if not overtly expressed. Hence although some Christian activists felt alienated among their own respective congregations, whilst in turn they were surrounded by people with a common goal when participating in climate events, this fact did not undermine their commitment to their own faith community.

One central informant, who I will call Rachel, described her direct action experiences with affinity groups where she was the only Christian activist as lacking 'a spiritual dimension', and expressed the desire to form a Christian affinity group. However, this did not prevent her from

taking part in other climate direct action events with religiously unaffiliated activists, as her own immediate Christian network was less supportive of this form of protest. In a different instance Rachel talked about her tacit opposition and confusion when a member of her affinity group planned to dress up as a nun during a coming direct action. She saw this as being 'disrespectful to my sisters in faith', but did not know if she had the right to oppose it.

Outwardly it would seem that identities are fluctuating according to group activities. But I posit that the primary identity remains active despite temporary demarcations and allegiances. Climate activists often demarcated against other groups, the anti-groups, or incorporated themselves into a group according to the context they found themselves in. For example in 2008, speaking from beside a pulpit, a Christian activist, who I will call Matt, reassured a Christian congregation that was shortly going to join the Global Day of Action march in December 2008:

And I am sick and tired of these environmentalists saying to me, 'finally you've decided to join the bandwagon' [...] and I always tell them 'we were the first environmentalists'.

Yet, only hours later, in a public address to the undifferentiated crowd in a public square in London, Matt explained that whether or not people were coming at this from a faith perspective, like himself, 'we are all in this together'. Christian activists often acknowledge the divide between secular and faith activists and when this speaker addressed the secular Campaign against Climate Change crowd at a Climate Vigil in 2010 he started by saying: 'I know most of you here have no faith, we are people of faith and we're not going to apologise for it'.

A good illustration of the conflict inherent in the secular green – faith division and its effect on identity, is provided by an online Guardian environmental blog, entitled 'Why is it so hard to be black and green?' by environmentalist Sylvia Arthur, where she quotes Muzammal Hussain, the Chair of the London Islamic Network for the Environment/ Wisdom in Nature, who kindly participated in and enabled my research with that group:

Sometimes I think I'm just too black to be green. With my required international travel (to see the relatives) and my hereditary love of meat it seems being black and green are two incompatible states. There are other times when I almost feel too green to be black. Trying to convince friends and family of the urgency of global warming is like trying to persuade

the BNP that immigration is a good thing. As Muzammal Hussain, founder of the London Islamic Network for the Environment says, it's a constant 'cultural commute' (Arthur, 2009).

I propose here that the Climate Movement, the Transition Towns Movement and the faith groups/ networks are autonomously distinguished within the big picture by their separate primary identities. Although the above quotation suggests that instead of a primary-secondary identity, it would be more accurate to look at the journey between the identities, the 'cultural commute', as Muzammal Hussain put it, I am inclined, at a macro level at least, to conclude that my data supports the primary source model proposed in Chapter 3: faith identities are retained as primary identities to ensure a sense of continuity and to facilitate an affective engagement with Climate Change.

One important separation between the groups and the anti-groups is the resources they have or think they have, and some approaches to social movements already established the importance of resources in the consolidation of the movement (see McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Hence religious activists often refer to religious institutions, religious texts, religious buildings, and existing infra-structure, as resources that should be mobilised in the Climate Change campaign. They often see these pre-existing resources as an advantage that activist religious groups already have and thus are able to contribute to the larger movement. To some extent they see these resources as leverage in negotiating mergers and forming alliances. To exemplify, in an online group discussion about a Transition Town conference organised by the Christian Ecology Link (2009), one informant, Terry, responded with the following reflection:

I share your reservations about the Transition Movement. I acknowledge their energy, and how rapidly their movement has developed in recent years. But how rooted are they? Either in their communities or in their philosophies or worldviews? Christianity (despite declining church attendances) tends to involve a much wider spectrum of the population. And we can draw on centuries of thinking and debate on Christian ethics to guide us. And CEL, though small, goes back 25 years plus. I'm all for co-operation with the TT

movement – but the TT movement has at least as much to learn from CEL and the Christian environmental movement as the other way around.

Although the above example can be discussed in terms of identity and demarcation – identity achieved through defining the group against the anti-groups – the clear emphasis on resources cannot be neglected, and it could perhaps suggest a strong link between shared resources and collective identity formation, between what ‘we have’ and what ‘we are’. In this case Terry reminds the group that CEL goes back 25 years plus, therefore it has more of a past than TT, it has more experience and hence it can negotiate itself a better deal. Claiming resources might permit groups to have a greater degree of control in the double edged process of identity preservation. In the above quote despite what is presented as an unequal, self-advantageous, distribution of resources, cooperation is intended to be balanced or fair. This is partly because activist faith groups are aware of the fact that the above mentioned resources are still in the bush and not yet in the hand, i.e. the larger Christian population is not yet mobilised on climate action; and partly because faith groups are distinctly aware of the ‘wariness’ the larger green community has towards Christianity or organised religion generally:

Christians can be seen as the old (failed) world order – and why engage with them when a new order (based on local community, networked with other communities nationally and now internationally) [referring to Transition Towns] is being built? (Dowd, 2009).

My data shows that climate activists who are part of green faith networks, and therefore promote and organise their own campaigns and events, do not fully take to the Climate Movement or the Transition Towns Movement, despite being supportive or openly contributing to and promoting their agendas. Thus they maintain a certain degree of independence from these movements, drawing from their primary faith identities and can experience identity conflicts or even feel discriminated and unwelcomed. They sometimes ask for a greater diversity within the Climate Movement and experience feelings of marginality.

Green Faith: Merging Identities

In this final section I will investigate how activists attempt or succeed in merging their ecological beliefs and religious faith. Moreover I will examine the processes that enabled them to operate from a centred identity. I posit here that ecological concerns may organise around the same structure or have the same crucial ingredients as religious faith. For faith activists this merger should be viewed as a successful integration of their most salient identities or a way of assimilating their ecological concerns into their primary identity. I will use the socio-cognitive model of transference to demonstrate how this merger takes place, looking particularly at tree imagery.

Most of the Christian participants in my research placed themselves 'on the questioning side of the Church'. This is important when we speak about faith because in simple terms 'faith' is often referred back etymologically to its Latin roots *fidem*, from *fidere*, meaning 'to trust'. 'To question' is of course somewhat antithetical to 'believing without seeing' (John 20: 29), and many of my Christian informants described themselves as belonging to the progressive side of their religious tradition, seeing a role for themselves in questioning its beliefs and practices, pushing it or taking it forward. As I already exemplified earlier in this chapter Christian eco-evangelists often ask: 'Where was Man when God created the Earth?' This is a clear challenge to the stewardship message and a humbling reminder that the earth preceded 'man' in the story of creation.

Paradoxically Climate Change also involves an element of 'faith' – as one has a very small, according to the 2007 report of the IPCC 'less than 10%', window of opportunity to disbelieve it: it is 'only' more than 90% likely (IPCC, 2007). Some activists (not necessarily the religious ones) talk about Climate Change as an epiphany, 'once it truly hits you, once you internalise it, you have no choice but to act'. One CEL informant who is engaged in eco-missionary activism, and so speaks about Climate Change to Christian congregations, always ends her talks by quoting the Matrix (1999):

You take the blue pill, the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe.

My informant thus gives the congregation the opportunity to learn the truth, just as the Matrix hero, Neo, is offered the opportunity to learn the truth about the nature of reality. There was often a narrative of denial followed by acceptance, a struggle with a new order of things and again 'a moment of truth'. One informant talked about Climate Change in relation to the five steps of bereavement: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance. What Christians and Muslims refer to when they speak about faith is not exactly foreign to the other activists I have interviewed. My data shows that in secular climate discourse there is often a personal or private story to be told, of how the individual came to make sense of it or peace with it, and often arrived at a personal coping mechanism that is not only outwardly expressed through activism but is inwardly developed: through acceptance, lifestyle changes, appreciation of beauty, celebration of the present time.

When religious activists adopt ideas and practices from the Climate and Transition Movements they need to accord these with their own religious beliefs and practices. Only when this process takes place the new practices are fully absorbed. Moreover, when religious activists' ecological concerns pass over the threshold of their primary identities, these concerns take on the importance and relevance that can promote profound changes or actions. To explain this I will provide the following excerpt from an interview with a Christian activist, Lucy, who spoke of her own journey to becoming a Green Christian:

I am an Anglican and the daughter of a vicar [...] I grew up in Zimbabwe and I was surrounded by Christians, I probably thought [then] everyone was a Christian. I first came into contact with other Green Christians at an Operation Noah meeting [in London]. I went because one of the organisers is my godmother. It is amazing when you inject faith into the subject of Climate Change, suddenly you're not allowed to be resigned. Before I was an environmental officer at University. [Yet] they were separate issues [environmentalism and religion]. But when it becomes your faith, you have to believe you can change things.

Being an environmental officer did not make Lucy an activist. This transformation, namely becoming an activist, took place when Climate Change became enmeshed with her faith, with her identity as a Christian, precisely because it gained an emotional dimension.

Apart from drawing in direct ways from Permaculture sources, my informants adopted it in more subtle ways, at a linguistic and cognitive-behavioural level. For example in a lecture on Transition Towns given in 2010, a Christian vicar who was also a transitioner, explained Permaculture design thus: 'You find out what God is doing and you get out of the way' and 'You let God do the heavy lifting'. This almost equates God to natural processes; God is Nature or works through Nature. Other times activists suggested taking 'time to observe' before making a decision.

The Christian and Muslim participants in my research assimilated Permaculture differently. Christian participants were more inclined to 'translate' Permaculture into Christian vernacular, as exemplified above, whilst Muslim activists integrated Permaculture in a more *ad litteram* fashion. The Muslim group went from 'London Islamic Network for the Environment' to 'Wisdom in Nature' - their new name said nothing about their faith. Perhaps their new name made no reference to Islam because they could not successfully blend their existing religious identity and the new green discourse in this instance. They did not 'translate' the new discourse, which might be for purely linguistic reasons: this new acquired discourse was not in competition with their English lexical structures, because they were using English as a secular language (whilst the Islamic prayers were in Arabic). As I pointed out in the previous section, Muslim participants also spoke of having to 'culturally commute' between Islam and environmentalism. When they did get involved in an exercise of translation, it was from an outsider role, they became the interpreter between the two. As they could not expect other activists to be familiar with Islamic teachings, they explained to the activists at Climate Camp how Islam could contribute to the Climate Movement in a workshop entitled 'Muslims and the Climate Movement' (2009). Similarly they published a booklet on Islam and Climate, which was aimed at a largely Muslim readership. In the booklet they literally offered Quranic translations for Permaculture principles (such as 'patience'/observing in the example below) by quoting appropriate religious literature that conveyed the message being advanced:

Just as we might recognise the pressing nature of the Climate challenge, we must, as expressed by Surat 103, Al-Asr, simultaneously enjoin one another in 'truth' and 'patience'. ('Islam and Climate Change – A Call to Heal', Wisdom in Nature booklet, 2010).

Assimilating new discursive units could create an identity conflict in faith based groups. By translating this newly acquired discourse into Christian language, participants could better blend their primary Christian identity and subsequent layers of green identity and thus operate from their identity centre or core. For example, a Christian participant in a Transition Towns conference organised by Green Christians asked during a workshop if transitioning was going to be done 'in the name of Jesus'. The process of superimposing new information on existing matrixes functioned similarly at other levels. Theology was also engaged in translation by 'recovering' 'lost' ecological and environmental wisdom, and thus creating a homogenous whole, in 'ecothology'. For the Christian activists the planet was often spoken of as 'God's creation' (or in some cases 'the body of the Lord') more often than it would simply be 'the planet'. By putting together 'God' and 'the planet', Green Christians could maintain an undivided focus. Since, as I argued previously, at the macro level of the Climate Movement 'nature/ the planet' often carried subversive valences (being opposed to the Judeo-Christian divine), this merger was almost necessary to prevent an identity conflict. In contrast, the Muslim activists almost never used such collocations as 'God's creation' when referring to the planet, yet they more frequently acknowledged 'the cultural commute' or identity conflicts between their faith and green identity.

Trees as Chronic Cues

In the final sub-section of the present chapter I will examine the internal processes that enabled the blending or merger of the religious and activist identities. As I put forward in Chapter 3, I believe a helpful theoretical model to understand this processes is the socio-cognitive model of transference. In my research field a 'chronic' cue in facilitating the process of transference, was represented by 'trees'. From a practical point of view, trees are often considered the most reliable means of getting rid of carbon. My data indicated that 'lyrical trees' were a leitmotif in Climate spirituality. Conferences on eco-spirituality were interspaced with planting trees and reciting poetry (Kearns & Keller, 2007), activists serenaded trees in 'humorous'/playful Climate Change advertisements, other activists planted trees and said Native American blessings.

I juxtapose here three examples from the field, fig. 12, 13 and 14 (below), and discuss how the process of transference might take place. The first tree (fig. 12), from a conference on Transition Towns held in 2009 by CEL, had at the very top a biblical dictum: 'Jesus said, "a tiny seed growing into a big tree will provide shelter and food"'. This was the only Christian text contained in the poster, the rest of it was entirely concerned with environmental news or facts, for example: 'plans revealed: town council's "No" to Tesco' or 'new cycle runway'. The biblical reference could be seen as a way of bridging or validating the new information contained by the poster, through something that would already be accepted and perhaps known by the Christian attendants. The lower branch of the tree had a prayer pocket attached to it, in which people were encouraged to place their own prayers, promises and thoughts. Placing a personal prayer in this instance would ensure the full assimilation of the environmental message, as the new information could be taken on as a matter of personal interest by the person offering the prayer. On the ground, at the roots of the tree, the word 'commitment' was suitably stitched on a knitted piece of material (this would require more effort than simply drawing it on paper).

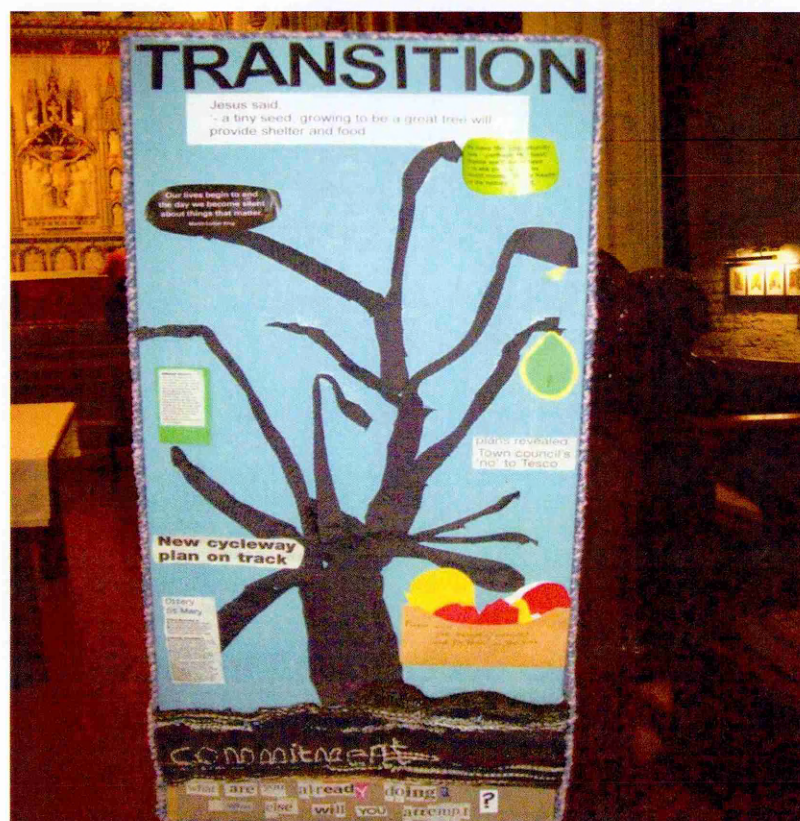


Fig. 12 Prayer tree at CEL Conference on Transition Towns, Devon, 2009

The prayer tree was popular in religious contexts, whilst non-religious activists and groups (such as the Green Party for instance) offered ‘poetry trees’ instead. The trees below (fig. 13 and 14) came from the Greenbelt festival in Cheltenham Spa, Gloucestershire (2009) and the Transition Towns festival in Wells, Somerset (2009), respectively.



Fig. 13 Prayer tree with roots in the Earth, Greenbelt festival, 2009



Fig. 14 ‘Space for Life’ tree with roots in the planet, Transition Towns festival, 2009

The quote underneath the 'Space for Life' tree (fig 14) reads: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world, it's the only thing that ever does.' Like the previous example (fig. 12), the emphasis was placed on 'commitment', which again was positioned at the root of the message: 'a small group of committed people'. Another parallel could be drawn between the metaphor of the 'tiny seed' (with great prospects) and 'the small group of thoughtful committed people' (also with great prospects). Both the Greenbelt tree and the 'Space for Life' tree have roots coming directly from the planet. If the Greenbelt tree (fig. 13) was rooted in a convex 'ground' (with a continent sketched on it to complement the suggestion of a sphere or the planet), in the 'Space for Life' tree, the planet was no bigger than a flower pot. In numerous representations of the planet the scale was thus manipulated so that the planet could be seen as a more manageable 'one place', small enough to enable the individual to personally relate to it (often physically hold it, or carry it in one's arms).

In my data 'lyrical trees' were both transferable symbols (being able to penetrate through faith/ secular boundaries for instance) and also, more importantly, they were symbols that could transfer new discourse, or carry new meaning on their backs. Such leitmotifs might be understood to be the very vehicles of the Climate 'zero carbon' discourse. Boundaries between different networks, although reinforced by the faith/secular divide, were permeated by these basic adaptable morphemes or chronic cues. Identifying the bridges of transference might enable scholars to learn more about the newly acquired discourse, from its relation to the religious terms it was matched with or transferred upon. For example Christians often spoke about 'transitioning' as 'witnessing'. This was not a random association, as both transitioning and Christian witnessing shared a common emphasis on a sort of passive activism, an activism that was not forceful, but gentle, exemplary and non-confrontational.

The planet was sometimes personified as 'our mother' by climate activists (Mother earth is a ubiquitous collocation), which might represent one of the most evident examples of transference. Attributing a maternal dimension to the planet may balance out its blind, unforgiving side. For the Christian activists it might be easier to love the planet as 'the body of God' or 'God's creation' rather than learning how to love the planet from scratch, with no redirection of feelings to begin with. The Muslim activists organised and took part in such practices as 'fasting for the planet',

seemingly wishing to induce a love for the planet through religious or spiritual practices, perhaps an indirect way of achieving transference. LINE/WIN's 'transformative approach to caring for the Earth' may represent an attempt to extend the self in ways in which it had never been challenged to do before. Humans have clear notions of feeling patriotic or sharing in a national or religious identity, but learning to share into a planetary identity may require a transformative approach.

Conflicts emerged more often in the context of spiritual practices. To preserve their primary faith identities, Christians and Muslims who become involved with various eco-spiritual practices (such as group meditation, artistic and dramatic enactment), distinguished these last from their own religious/spiritual practices by emphasising the 'play' and 'fun' aspects of ecological practices. One Muslim informant shared in a public forum about his experience of a Permaculture camp and stated there were no conflicts with his own Islamic faith; he explained:

We stood in a circle and pretended we were the elements: the wind, the rain [...] We all did this sort of thing as children but as adults we have forgotten how to play.

This distinction between play and the more serious business of faith practices was somewhat ambiguous, first because eco Christians also used 'games' or 'role playing' in their more experimental congregations, and second, because eco-spiritual practices were often reverent, solemn or contemplative. Perceiving a distinction between a more reverent religious attitude on one hand and the ludic element in ecological practices on the other, seemed to assist faith activists to maintain a hiatus between their primary faith identities and subsequent layers of green identity. The process of transference allowed new units of discourse to begin to occupy the same central space inside their respective matrixes of meaning, thus leading towards a merger of identities and a new green faith.

I endeavoured to show here that new climate discourse was not simply assimilated by the participants in my research as an addition or extension to their existing vocabulary, or in an indiscriminate fashion. I argued that new discourse deposited by matching existing cognitive-affective units. The affective component is extremely relevant, as it was not only that activists started to speak differently, but also began to feel differently. We could even conjecture that the

new extensions of the relational self, 'self – planet' or 'self – God's creation' in this instance, led subjects to respond and act differently.

Conclusions

My research showed that Christians and Muslims were often marginalised in their respective faith communities and congregations, due to the latter lacking an ecological agenda. As I discussed here they often placed themselves on the more peripheral questioning side of the church. Similarly, faith activists were also a minority on the climate front, not only in numbers but also because the subversive, anti-establishment, biocentric core ethos and discourse of the Climate Movement would often be at odds with what, as I proposed in Chapter 3, represented their primary faith identities. I argued here that they merged the religious and ecological discourses as a means of preserving a united identity as well as allowing for a reassignment of feelings of affective re-engagement.

One of my research questions (RQ2) aimed to identify the processes of cross-fertilisation that take place when Christians and Muslims take part in the Climate Movement. The present chapter shows that the faith groups had been substantially influenced by the climate discourse they became exposed to in their involvement with the Climate and Transition Movements. I argued here that religious language was primarily used as a bridge of transference for the newly acquired discourse.

Christian activists were inclined to translate units of shared discourse by a process of superimposing new information on existing matrixes. Thus, green discourse was merged or matched with congruent or compatible Christian vernacular. In other cases a new green practice would be done 'in Jesus' name', still a means of fusing it with tradition.

The Muslim group distinguished between Islamic prayers and ecological reflections, unlike the Christian informants who were a lot more inclined to innovate on traditional lines and perform ecological rituals. This may explain why Muslims more often reported having to culturally commute between Deep Ecology and Islam, or experienced identity conflicts. Their change of name and their focus on Permaculture and ecological practices, demonstrate that this group found it

more difficult to merge or reconcile their Islamic identity on one hand, and that of climate activists on the other.

This chapter also shows that answering my research question that enquired into the processes of cross-fertilisation between the religious and non-religious networks (RQ2) is connected with answering the next research question, on personal faith identity (RQ3). As I proposed in my theoretical model chapter (Chapter 3) and demonstrated in the present chapter, activists retained their primary faith identity in their involvement with the Climate and Transition Movements. This connection with their tradition provided activists with a sense of continuous identity which permitted them to assimilate new elements through processes of frame extension, translation and transference. This process not only led these activists to adopting new practices and behaviours but also hybridised their faith identity as they became: 'Green Christians' and 'Green Muslims'. Most importantly using the socio-cognitive model of transference, I showed in this chapter that the processes of cross-fertilisation that enabled Christians and Muslims to adopt green ideas and practices was not in its essence cognitive or behavioural, but affective and involved a re-direction of feelings.

Despite Christians and Muslims fully absorbing the Permaculture ideology they were not as open to the green spirituality of the other networks they encountered in this field. On one hand Christian and Muslim activists were keen to be part of the new transition communities, yet they were not fully comfortable with the new type of spirituality on offer and often emphasised the ludic elements it contained, which was a means of keeping it separate from their own religious tradition. The following chapter will investigate spirituality and community in this field.

CHAPTER 7

SPIRITUALITY AND COMMUNITY IN THE CLIMATE NETWORKS

Based on my network model discussed in Chapter 3, the faith networks operate autonomously as well as part of the Climate and Transition Movements that function as attractors for the networks they aggregate. What distinguishes the activists in these networks is not merely membership or subscription to a publication, but also important differences in spiritual practices (or attitude toward spirituality) as well as in what is meant by or achieved through community. In the present chapter I aim to show that these differences are significant enough as to justify the fact that the individual activist is not just a free radical floating among various networks according to their ad hoc pulling power, but distinctly attached or committed to one network despite participation into other networks. This further supports my investigation on identity presented in Chapter 6, where I showed that activists have a primary identity. The present chapter also shows that there is yet enough common ground in the explorations and expression of spirituality and community in this field as to allow for the transmission of new elements and ideas among very different networks.

In the first section I will show that there has been a departure from a spirituality for the self to a more aggregated spirituality that can (or at least aims) to serve a community. In the second section I will investigate artistic expression as a common spiritual currency among the networks. I will offer here a case study of my participant observation of a one day Work That Reconnects workshop.

From a Spirituality for the Self to a Community Spirituality

My data indicates that transition spirituality is predicated on community. Most significantly the Heart and Soul is a desired spiritual hub for the transition community. This was an interesting finding from the very beginning of my research as I began to contrast the climate and transition discourse with the secondary literature on alternative spirituality.

The Climate Camp and Transition Towns types of community have some designated outer and inner spaces for spirituality. Although these have an optional, non-obligatory character it is precisely the openness of these forms of spirituality that ensures increased and collective engagement from participants. In the picture below (fig. 15) activists are constructing a dragon that was processed all the way to the Kingsnorth power station on the day of collective direct action. The construction of the dragon took place in the main court field and as it involved all sorts of expertises it attracted diverse participation. For instance, some of the Christians I was observing took part in the construction, dramatic enactment (the dragon becomes sick after being fed coal) and procession.



Fig. 15 Building King Snorth at Climate Camp, Kingsnorth 2008



Fig. 16 Rehearsing the procession, Climate Camp, Kingsnorth 2008

As I showed in Chapter 1, Dominic Corrywright (2009) shows that wellbeing practices have an important social dimension, as the wellbeing of the individual is dependent on the wellbeing of their network and community (2009: 2, 10). Climate spirituality seems to have developed on this territory of healing and wellbeing, by progressing to a planetary level. To prioritise the needs of the planet some climate activists restricted their diet to low carbon food only, such as vegan, locally sourced food or ate by ‘skipping’ (out of supermarkets’ skips).

Climate Camp experiments with an expansion of the classic green commune. The commune is a moral experiment in an ‘an imaginary community’ (see Tremlett, 2012) where campers cook, work and train together. Most of the core campers would already be living in an eco-commune or would be looking to live in one. Buying land and building eco communities is a subject often discussed in workshops and groups. The Climate Camp is in some way a reunion of eco-campers who can expand the concept to a bigger dynamic group and also demonstrate it to the general public.



Fig. 17 Cooking in one of the communal kitchens, Climate Camp Kingsnorth 2008

A simple distinction between Climate Camp and Transition Towns could be made in terms of rural and urban. Whilst the Climate Camp advocates or models a rural community, Transition Towns focus on adapting green community ideas to the realities of urban living. With Climate Camp we can observe the central themes of the commune of the 1960s counterculture and the 19th century socialist ideals on community. Often at Climate Camp one would hear about eco communes that are being started or workshops would be held on the theme of starting a commune. Eco communes would often involve a number of rules for all involved. The rules more often refer to diet, transport and decision making: vegan or vegetarian diet, common transport (for example no individually owned cars), and consensus as a way of making decisions.



Fig. 18 Building rocket stoves, Climate Camp Kingsnorth 2008



Fig. 19 Training grounds with simulated fences, Climate Camp 2008

Kim Knott asks in her paper on community if the search for community – the contemporary need and desire for belonging - is a spiritual quest (2002:11). Utopic communities can certainly be

investigated from this perspective. The search for perfection has spiritual meaning and significance. Liminal communities like the Climate Camp maintain a high level of entropy that demands levels of energy and dedication akin to a rigorous spiritual practice. The camp wakes up early dawn to guard the gates, the gates are continuously watched and preserved, meetings are held, food is cooked at all times, all this alongside erecting a whole village overnight. The ephemeral nature of these settlements are perhaps further proof for their spirituality (Bowman, 2008).

Community and Spirituality among Climate Campers

At Climate Camps I interviewed activists who were not part of the Christian group I was specifically researching. I did this to achieve a level of contrast and some of my findings are relevant for a discussion on spirituality. Informants who identified themselves as spiritual but not religious, or 'coming from' a Druidic or Pagan tradition, often used the same language Christians did, at least in content if not in form. The quote below comes from an extended interview with one informant whom I will call Kevin. I divided this passage into three paragraphs to enable us to look at how the language changes at both signifier and signified level.

- a) I discovered deity through meditation. I think that each person creates their own deity, projects their own image upon deity, an angry man will create an angry god, a jealous man will create a jealous god. It's the same deity in all religions but it's perverted by humans' projections... I spent all my life being connected to nature. It's been here forever so [how] can we own it? So it seems we are all connected, we are part of it, yet we separate, we divide, our ego is the reason why we have all these problems.
- b) We have a task to do which is to look after all of creation. I don't own or control anything, everything belongs to God. In order to be a Christian you need to let Jesus to live through you, or to be a Buddhist you let Buddha to live through you. You are only a Druid if you have respect for all of life, all of the creation, for all of the beauty and abundance of nature. Having respect means going beyond our comfort zones in order to look after it,

protect it. I am surprised at how few Druids there are in a place like this. I was born a Druid if that makes sense, and I hang around with Christians and Buddhists and others.

c) And I can call myself a Druid but ultimately who am I, what is my title: I am a fixer, somebody who fixes stuff. If something is broken I help to fix it. (BCC08)

As the interview was unstructured the informant spoke freely and I only interrupted when I needed further clarification. So the excerpt above is a continuous stream of thought which makes it all the more surprising. In paragraph a) Kevin tells me that he has come to his own understanding of the divine, which is in line with much of other secondary sources and academic literature on spirituality and New Age: self exploration, focus on 'what makes sense for oneself', and an eclectic mix of religious practices, in this case meditation. We can further observe a possible rejection of Christianity which is also characteristic for alternative spirituality, New Age and Paganism: Kevin mentions an angry and jealous God, which is the main complaint against the Old Testament representation of divinity. Kevin tells me about his own animistic understanding of the world and his own reverence for nature. Again we can identify his contrast with religions or religionists who do divide the divine from nature, again a common conflicting division between New Age and Christianity (Newport, 1998:274-278). In paragraph a) the words Kevin uses positively are 'deity' and 'nature' (to describe his own understanding) whilst when he talks about human projections, anger and jealousy, he uses the word 'God':

In paragraph b) the language changes quite dramatically. Kevin talks about 'God' as separate, as somebody who owns everything: 'everything belongs to God'. More so he uses the word 'creation' twice, and says that 'we have a task to look after all creation'. This is clearly the Christian message of stewardship. We can interpret this as a Christian residue in Kevin's religious make up or simply as language that is familiar and can be summoned easily when talking about ecological values. As religious education is a school subject, we can expect anyone who attended secondary school in recent decades to have assimilated the stewardship messages to some degree, and as Kevin demonstrates further, an understanding of other religious traditions. If in the 1960s one would have needed to actively spiritually seek, today one simply needs to attend RE lessons.

Finally in the third section c), Kevin deconstructs his religious identity by identifying himself as a 'fixer', which was what he was doing at the time of the interview.

Another non-Christian informant who self-identified as Buddhist told me:

Walter: What inspired me is an 8th century Tibetan prophecy, that predicted this time, it talked about a time when horses run on metal wheels and the Tibetans will run to the land of the white man, it's about sacred cycles of time, and that the world would be in a situation when it would need people to free it from oppression. These people were called Shambala Warriors, and they would have two weapons: awareness and another one, I can't remember, and... motivation, I think. You need the awareness of what needs to be done and the motivation, energy or willpower to do it. [...]

Maria: What is your own understanding of spirituality?

Walter: The root of spiritual, I think, is Latin, I am not sure – spirare – which means to breathe together, like in the word conspire – 'conspiracy'. Spirare – Spiritual. So you can see people coming together are conspiring together in a positive sense, which is the act of breathing together, it's the communion.

As some scholars of religion have already shown British Buddhism is intricately connected with New Age (Cush, 2000), and throughout the interview Walter described his religious identity as a mix of a variety of influences. The language used to describe the prophecy suggests a personal detachment or extrication from civilization and modernity, as an association is made between 'the white man' and oppression (Walter is himself a British white man). Spirituality is described in terms of 'communion', 'breathing together' and 'conspiring together in a positive sense'.

Another informant who identified herself as Pagan, told me a different version of the above prophecy, which was in fact the prophecy of the Rainbow Warriors – an allegedly Native American prophecy which served in the 1960s as a foundation myth for the Greenpeace Movement:

Selena: The Rainbow Movement began in the United States probably in the early 70s, it was the hippies, you know, coming together and holding gatherings... And they realised that they needed to talk about spiritual things. And they began to make a connection with

the old prophecies about Rainbow Warriors. Basically we are the people we've been waiting for. And the Rainbow Warriors were prophesised to come when the Earth is in great distress, the trees are withering, the fish are dying, there are great storms, and then the Rainbow Warriors will come, and they will come from many lands...'

'We are the people we have been waiting for' is perhaps a Climate mantra. This has been reiterated to me by many activists, from both faith and non-faith networks. It contains a rejection of the messianic message, as well as an empowering urgent call for the present. It speaks about the collective and communal power and as Selena associates it above, through its prophetic implication it is 'a spiritual thing'. During other conversations and follow up interviews Selena, like Walter, also displayed a disassociation from her 'white' identity, or identity as a white woman. Her subversive identity was almost embodied through specific Native American Indian items of clothing, a certain exotic economy in her speech and posture, her diet, etc.

All three activists, Kevin, Walter and Selena achieved a detachment from modernity and its abuses by identifying on some levels with elements of indigeneity in oppressed populations (Celts, Buddhists, Native Americans). They all spoke of 'spirituality' in terms of a past tradition or traditions, rather than a newly discovered practice: Kevin explained spirituality as the very life of the religious practitioner (be it Druid, Christian, Buddhist, etc.), Walter looked for its etymological roots in Latin, Selena reiterated the old prophecies of the Native American Indians. They all spoke of spirituality as a communal rather than an individual practice: in 'gatherings' (Selena), '*conspirare*' breathing together (Walter), whilst Kevin deplored the small number of Druids or Druid gatherings at Climate Camp.

Community and Spirituality among Transitioners

As I have already pointed out, my thesis is primarily concerned with what Transitioners think and do rather than what the movement as a whole prescribes. Most transitioners may be secular or approach 'transition' from a secular view point, yet others will be members of other networks and groups, like the faith groups I have researched. Transition communities are envisaging a time when

communities of place would be functioning through Permaculture principles. However activists are normally dispersed around a community and only coming together for special events.

There are 12 famous steps for new transition communities and I will present them below as they were reiterated by a large group of transitioners during a national Transition Towns conference I took part in:

1. Form an initiating or stirring group and design its demise.
2. Raise awareness.
3. Say the foundations.
4. Organise a great unleashing.
5. Form working groups.
6. Use open space.
7. Develop visible practical manifestations of the project.
8. Facilitate the great re-skilling.
9. Build a bridge to local government.
10. Honour the elders.
11. Let it go where it want to go.
12. Create an energy descent action plan/ Pathway.

Finally, after applying the 12 steps, an important final yet encompassing principle is that the entire process should be fun and should be celebrated.

These points are important in understanding Transition Towns thinking on the subject of community and spirituality. The starting point says that one should form a steering committee and also design its demise. This is because transition communities are aimed to become autonomous entities that can function in a decentralised manner. The steering committee is therefore only useful in initialising the chain reactions that can promulgate the formation or consolidation of these desired transition communities. Moreover transitioners often talk about the threat of becoming 'rigid' or distanced from the original vision. Again, as with Climate Camp, we can see an effort to

maintain a state of liminality by dissolving structure before it has a chance to take place and become the status quo. The high level of plasticity the Transition Towns Movement aims to maintain can also be deduced from point 11 ('Let it go where it wants to go'), which is in fact a tenet of Permaculture philosophy. Christian transitioners translate this as 'See where God is going and get out of the way'.

The working groups mentioned by point 5 act like focus groups at a larger level, commonly preoccupied with food, transport, waste, and very importantly 'Heart and Soul'. The Heart and Soul, as I have already explained in previous chapters, was described to me as 'a space for grief and celebration' or 'a central space for feelings'. This space is also partly offered in the Climate Camp, which customarily has a 'Wellbeing tent', a place where people are invited to go and share their feelings.

The movement places great emphasis on celebration or rather community coming together to celebrate. The 12 steps of transition need to be celebrated and the whole process is desired to be joyous. This is partly to do with the recognition that transitioner activists are expected to put in a lot of work and thus the element of 'fun' is central to keeping up spirits through the task of accomplishing such great objectives as *'the great re-skilling'*. Yet the 'fun' is, however, not devoid of its own significance. It is not any type of 'fun'. To make this point it may be useful to offer an example from a publicised event offered by Transition Bath in 2010:

Transition Bath is proud to present the Gaia's Company's 'Gaia - The Cabaret'. In an evening of songs, sketches and surprises discover how the planet really works with the startling, strangely attractive world viewed through Gaia's Eye. Hear the true story of how James Lovelock first glimpsed Gaia and why NASA wouldn't believe him!... Hold your breath as you delve into the murky microbial world uncovered by Lynn Margulis... Make friends with the mighty mitochondria... Thrill to the unexpected delights of the Human Circus... Lose yourself in the self-organising wonder of the Do-Be-Do Chorus... [...]

Follow the trail of the researchers who dared to ask: 'Do bacteria have a voice?' and, if so, 'What could they possibly have to say?'... (Transition Bath website).

Here the reader is invited to an evening of ‘fun’ - a cabaret, even a circus. The Human Circus (which I had the pleasure to see performing myself during a ‘Big Green’ festival I took part in 2004 whilst I was studying for my MA and so a few years before I began my doctoral research), do indeed perform like a circus yet by the end of the act nobody would feel like laughing. It is a spectacular dramatic performance on the ecological abuses humans are capable of, in effect the destruction of their world. The reader here is moreover invited to ‘discover’, ‘hear the true story’, ‘be enchanted’, ‘hold your breath’, ‘make friends with mitochondria’, ‘thrill’, ‘loose oneself’ through the media of songs, chorus, sketches, surprises and performances. It is not only an educational evening as in fact the element of ‘fun’ can catalyse a different type of exposure to facts, even seemingly dry scientific facts about mitochondria. It is an opportunity to explore science in a cathartic way.

Clearly some faith groups are doing this from a faith perspective. They translate the wonder of science into religious vocabulary. Quantum physics was explained to me by a Christian activist with a scientific background as ‘*we are in the mind of God*’, for example. GreenSpirit members are perhaps the best example for this, with their declared aim to integrate science and other wisdom traditions alongside Christianity. Yet non religious activists are, as we can see above, are doing this too by using the means of performance and artistic expression to enchant what used to be perceived as a spiritually arid territory.

The transition community is an imagined community of the future, a projection into a ‘zero carbon’ society that is experiencing ‘a new renaissance, unprecedented in human history’ (Hopkins in Sarre, 2009). In fact the very word ‘transition’ constantly reminds of this liminal, in-between state and of the fact that the end goal is to be found in the future. Its spirituality is also a spirituality of the future, a process of reconnecting humans not only among themselves, but within their ecology: with the earth or Gaia, and with the most invisible cellular levels as well. This is achieved not only through ‘facts’, because facts do not carry a moral impetus to act in a particular way. The process is one of re-kindling feelings of ‘love’ for the planet and life (human and non-human) through cathartic transformation. In this case, artistic expression and performance become vehicles for secular enchantment.

Community and Spirituality in Faith Networks

The emphasis on community is also there in the faith networks I have researched. As I have already discussed in previous chapters, the Christian and Muslim groups are involved in Transition Towns and so we can clearly see an interplay between belonging to a community of choice and yet needing to integrate in communities of place for the purpose of living out the environmental precepts integral to new climate communities. The faith communities have a further dilemma: they may have separate affiliations to an ecological community and their local church or mosque. Economic bioregionalism cannot solely function in a community of choice, although we can see that such efforts are made when faith communities come together. Exchanging food and recycling goods among members of faith communities are attempts to establish normative links that are there in Permaculture-based communities (as aspirations if not yet established). Anecdotally, I once offered to recycle a phone at a LINE/WIN meeting where the group was always asked to say whether they had anything they wanted to exchange or recycle for the next forum. I, somewhat reactively, offered to recycle my telephone, since I had two and thought it would be a nice gesture since everyone else seemed to contribute. However, by the time of the next forum, a month later, the telephone I was using stopped working and so I had to start to use the spare one. On the day of the next forum I, rather begrudgingly, unplugged my house phone and took it to the meeting and bought myself a new one upon my return to Bath. The moral being that month long recycling plans might not slot together quite as perfectly as daily exchanges in a community.

In 2009 the Christian Ecology Link hosted a three day retreat in Ringsfield Hall, in Suffolk, and surrounding grounds entitled: 'Welcome to the Banquet: Risking Community'. Much of the three days were spent discussing and practicing what community means, what shape it can take in our times, and specifically for those present. The workshops included role plays, reflections and drama on the subject of community, and ended in worship. In one exercise participants were asked to write succinctly (on post it notes) what community had to be about and add it to the board

Some of the themes that emerge from the analyses of this data are:

1. Welcoming/ Hospitable/ Diversity/ Open to the other (16 responses)
2. Shared/ Unity/ Shared Vision (11)

3. Exploration/ Freedom/ Risks/ Surprise/ Liberation (perhaps in contrast with focussed/ Grounded in Reality) (10)
4. Celebration/ Party/ Joy (8)
5. Local/ Place/ Rootedness (7)
6. Listening/ Reflectivity/ Gentleness (7)
7. Prayer/ Communion/ God (7)
8. Stewardship/ Responsibility/ Letting go of the self (4)

Based on these results we could contend that where community is concerned, the Green Christians who participated in this retreat think it is essential to be open to others, welcoming, hospitable, to be able to establish a community for the future. My data suggests that the theme of diversity in community is often approached from conflicting angles in the public and private sphere respectively. On one hand the Transition Towns vision as well as mainstream discourse is embraced by Green Christians and 'community' is envisaged as diverse, multi-cultural, plural and so on. On the other hand, despite this vision which is often reinforced in public talks and addresses, more privately participants will often talk about the relevance of a community in Christ, or the church as an epicentre of the place community. For example Edward Echlin, a Christian eco theologian and also Christian Ecology Link supporter, concludes his *Climate and Christ: A Prophetic Alternative*, with:

Harmony with the earth, in community, in an economy of quality with commitment to Jesus whom we await in hope, is the only genuine progress (Echlin, 2010: 130).

The new CEL initiative entitled 'Churches in Transition' evidences the negotiations between faith communities and plural 'secular' communities. The CEL 'Churches in Transition' leaflet answers the question of how churches can get involved in the Transition Movement by making a case for Christians to get involved:

The rapid emergence of the Transition Towns movement presents an opportunity for churches to get involved. If congregations can engage with their local initiative then there will be genuine benefits for the churches, the wider community and the planet. There are

many CEL members and other Christians who are already involved in local Transition initiatives. (*Churches in Transition*, 2009)

The call to involvement continues by explaining that, for Christians, the transition process involves a more substantive ‘transformation’, so that members can remain ‘faithful to our own tradition’ yet ‘credible in the eyes of those with whom we work, both inside and outside the churches’.

The last passage contains the element of negotiation, and now a case is made for the advantage the movement can draw from Christian or faith communities being involved:

Central to the concept of Transition Towns is the reality of local people working together. Of course many community groups already exist in cities, towns and villages across the country – and often the most visible, active and (almost certainly) oldest communities are based in churches. It therefore follows that truly successful transition initiatives will include the participation and wisdom of Christians and members of other faith groups (*Churches in Transition*, 2009).

Christians often emphasise both the material and intangible resources at their disposal. In this case the resource, or currency for inclusion, is ‘community’ itself. Christian communities are here described as ‘often the most visible, active and oldest’. This could represent a means of reassuring Christians of their own valuable contribution to the movement, and indeed the last statement suggests that ‘the participation and wisdom of Christians’ is the *sine qua non* of a successful transition process. A recent Christian Ecology Link conference (2012) explored the meaning of spiritual capital as a means of counteracting consumerism. Faith activists may see themselves as custodians of this spiritual capital that could contribute positively to the ecological crisis.

Similarly, Muslim transitioners or activists emphasise the importance of their faith tradition in facing environmental challenges. Being ‘green’ is sometimes considered mainstream and superficial, whilst Islamic principles can provide a ‘*deeper approach*’ to Climate Change. In the process of learning, acquiring and translating the transition discourse, Christians and Muslims also expand their own identity, forming a new one, that of ‘Christian Transitioner’ or ‘Muslim Transitioner’. If we consider identity itself to be a process, not a state or a set of attributes

(Giddens, 1990, 1991; Coupland & Nussbaum (eds), 1993) we may agree that identity is perpetually enhanced but also threatened by our relationships with others. As I have suggested in earlier chapters (Chapter 3 and 6), faith activists maintain a primary faith identity despite the levels of energy they invest into the Climate and Transition Movements. As a result their green identity struggles to be incorporated into their main faith identity through a process of translating green concerns into familiar religious language, as I already showed in the previous chapter (Chapter 6).

My data indicates that whilst Green Christians and Muslims are able to adopt most of the transition initiative, they are somewhat reluctant to take on the Heart and Soul spirituality and participate in Heart and Soul groups (unless they were in a position to organise these groups) although they would point out that they were decisively more inclined to take part in this than would be the other way around (for example transitioners going to Church). The transition model is a self-sufficient community model, and therefore does not/cannot include places of worship on its map of activity, as it cannot afford to disperse and divide its force. It is down to spirituality to ground and unite community and looking at the type of activities that take part in the Heart and Soul groups we can see this very clearly. As the name 'Heart and Soul' suggests, it represents the place where the community heart comes together, or the soul of the community.

I have asked both Christian and Muslim informants during interviews and informal conversations to describe their experience of the Heart and Soul transition groups. The responses were unanimous in their reluctance to adhere to the activities and all expressed some feelings of discomfort. Yet progressively I witnessed an increase in Deep Ecology practices which suggests that even though green Christians and Muslims might experience some suspicion toward eco-spirituality practices, they do adopt and customise these in their respective groups. One such example is artistic expression as a spiritual tool, for instance drawing with chalk or watercolours, or using play dough to express feelings is a widespread practice among, both in some New Religious Movements (e.g. Soka Gakkai, Scientology) but also with those who adopt Joanna Macy eco-spiritual activism work. Similarly Muslim informants organise spiritual workshops, where issues are explored through role play or drama. The spiritual workshop, which used to be largely New Age territory, is another example of exploratory spirituality that green Christians and

Muslims have adopted. Conversely, the Transition Towns 'Heart and Soul' can be as creative and adoptive as it wants to be, as long as it stays faith neutral.

In a workshop on 'Muslims and the Climate Campaign' delivered at the London Climate Camp, 2009, the LINE/WIN chair said that Islamic teachings and practices can be relevant/helpful even if you're not a Muslim. LINE/WIN often organises annual events that are both awareness raising and 'spiritual' (emic descriptor), such as 'Fast for the Planet', events that aim to be relevant for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. There is often a sense of 'spirituality' being offered as a helpful tool - in other words 'Here, you can still use our (disincarnate) spirituality, this is what we have got to offer'. Similarly 'Serum', a Christian discussion group, organises annual talks (at Greenbelt) for those who consider themselves spiritual 'but are not necessarily Christian'.

Concluding this section, the different networks I have investigated clearly have different approaches to both Spirituality and Community. It is through these different approaches that we can differentiate them in this field. At Climate Camp spirituality is explored through the very intensity of the protest lifestyle. Transitioners explore spirituality in a variety of ways, but often through performative events and activities. Faith activists need the depth in their respective spiritual tradition to feel fully engaged.

Climate campers explore spirituality and community in very specific settings, in an intense, accelerated process of imagining a perfect egalitarian and ecological community by growing and dismantling a community over and over. A transition community also has this built in mechanism of regeneration by deciding on the demise of the steering committee at the very beginning. As opposed to a Climate Camp community that has a limited time to explore and grow, the transition community aims to establish itself in time and follows very clear guidelines in its development. The transition community has milestones, such as 'the great unleashing' or 'the great re-skilling' that ensure that this community develops in a desired direction. Faith networks take part in their own explorations of community, which generally take the form of retreats.

For the individual activist these explorations are only fully satisfactory if they match their own approach to spirituality and community. As I showed here, for faith activists their own faith traditions contain deeper meanings, and activities in secular contexts lack an important spiritual

dimension. This further confirms my findings in regards to identity. In this case a sense of belonging is given by the very way communities are organised and the practices they follow. My data clearly shows that the Christian activists who took part in Climate Camps, continued to view their own faith network and even their own home church as their true home. A good analogy may be that of family and friends – as the saying goes ‘you don’t choose your family, but you can choose your friends’. However compatible one may feel with one’s friends, family often maintains one’s loyalty and allegiance. One activist told me for example that her home church knew that she disapproved of their attitude regarding gay marriage but she didn’t speak to them about this issue to avoid further conflict.

Having looked at the ways in which networks are different from each other, I will now follow by examining the common ground they share with each other, their common spiritual currency.

A Common Spiritual Currency

The networks in my research do succeed in exchanging ideas and communicating with each other through collective practices. Climate Spirituality has a distinctive artistic or creative dimension. A Transition Towns workshop that was widely promoted in 2010 was simply called ‘CreAte’. Almost all events I took part in abounded in water colours, paints, textile art, poetry and haiku writing. Drawing and painting are very common practices in this field, whether it is praying through painting at a Christian retreat, painting animal masks at Climate Camp, or painting one’s feelings at a Heart and Soul workshop. In the same line, Mathew Fox’s Creation Spirituality seems to offer a good blue print for green spirituality more generally: an eclectic and mobile collage of art, poetry and celebratory practices from around the world. Creativity may therefore be encouraged as a necessary precursor to social change, as some ecotheologians (like Matthew Fox or Thomas Berry) anticipate. From a different angle it also seems to accord well with studies in Social Psychology that focus on group behaviour and social change, which have found that social

creativity is used by groups as a tool to gain or redress status imbalance and seek positive distinctiveness (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

A common spiritual currency in this field may be represented by practices that have been influenced by what is widely known in green quarters as Joanna Macy's 'Work That Reconnects'. Macy is a scholar and Buddhist eco-activist who lives in California but travels internationally to give lectures and hold workshops on green spirituality. Together with Molly Young Brown, Macy put forward a set of ecological practices in their most famous book *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives* (Macy and Brown, 1998). Work That Reconnects practices provide a material and ritualistic dimension to ecological awareness raising and the aim is to provoke a transformation in participants. Below, I will present a case study of my own participant observation at a Work That Reconnects workshop held in Bath, in 2010. I will conclude with a discussion of green spirituality.

Work that Reconnect: A Case Study

'The Work that Reconnects' (WTR) is used frequently under various guises in my field of research. It is sometimes discussed in Climate Camp workshops and often offered by Transition Heart and Soul groups either as a one day transformative experience or incorporated in ongoing events. Many informants from the faith groups I have researched have experienced it in various forms and contexts. Some faith informants were reticent to take part in it and one Muslim informant pejoratively called it 'the work that disconnects', as he complained about one fellow transitioner's busy schedule. WTR is based on Deep Ecology principles and practices and inspired by the work and writings of Joanna Macy, a Buddhist eco-activist. I went on a one day WTR workshop and this case study is primarily based on my personal experience of this day.

The workshop was entitled 'Power for the Planet: The Work that Reconnects' and was held in a large country house with surrounding gardens and woods. We were asked to bring lunch and were informed that:

On the day we will explore together how we feel about the crisis happening around to us all on our planet at this time. Using the information and power of our feelings we will then

get a sense of what we are drawn to do in our lives in response to these transitions. A corner stone of the work is the notion that we are all interconnected, not only to each other but also to the natural world. We will explore how this can both support and empower us ('Power for the Planet' poster, 2009).

There were about twenty-five people taking part in the workshop and after introductions and ground rules, we took turns to speak about our feelings about Climate Change. The two women facilitators asked everyone to sit in a circle, and provided us with various means of expression: colour pencils and chalks at one stage or various other objects that we could take turns to hold depending on the feelings we were about to express – such as a staff to represent anger, a stone to represent sadness and despair, dried leaves to represent tears, and so on. There were many alternating activities, we were often asked to talk or listen to another person in a sort of therapy exchange exercise, or to stare for long periods of time into each other's eyes, which is of course a widely used spiritual technique, especially among new religious movements. Other exercises asked that we simulated various states (anger, relaxation) and there were some among us who were visibly more dramatically able or at least more relaxed than others. We were also asked to meditate on a private question and then go on a guided walk around the gardens and look inwards for an answer.

Having had some previous experience of similar practices during my fieldwork I found the day to be extremely interesting, thought provoking, yet emotionally trying. Although we were assured at the beginning that we would only be doing things that we were comfortable with, we were by the same token encouraged to be brave enough *'to step out of our comfort zone a bit'*. Looking deeply into another person's eyes for a long period of time is of course a very intimate experience that is in most cases (and perhaps rightly so) reserved for lovers. It can equally be unsettling to listen to somebody's deepest, most emotional feelings, without being able to respond (we were specifically asked to remain silent).

I felt privileged to be able to listen to people's inner feelings, yet on further reflection I can see that there were some specific markers that we were following on this journey and so to a certain extent it was not necessarily a personal account that we were hearing but an account that

had been solicited and provoked by stimulating material (such as crying leaves, desperate stones, anger staffs and so on), but I am not disputing that these feelings could have been genuine. When asked to draw an image of something we loved or made us happy, most people for instance drew an image 'from nature', like a tree or a flower. I felt a bit unsure about exhibiting my own drawing of a comfortable armchair complete with book and hot drink, alongside the others' less selfish pleasures.

The day ended on a high note, as we were asked to take turns and walk through a corridor made of our fellow 'reconnect-ors', whilst confidently stating an intention for the future and finally passing through a bridal arch, with everyone cheering us on. This graduation-like ceremony can be looked at as an initiation ritual and also as a way of making the whole experience more worthwhile, of providing a palpable service or evidence of a 'qualification', in return for the workshop fee. The act of standing in the middle of a circle of people whilst expressing one's guilt, anger, sadness, can be looked at as an alternative to religious confession. It is therefore unsurprising that Christians and Muslims who have experienced (partly or fully) the WTR have mixed feelings about their participation as some can encounter conflicts between their own spiritual practices and the ones introduced by this type of event. One Muslim informant, when asked in a forum about his experience at a Permaculture camp where participants were asked to mimic the elements (wind, earth, water, fire), explained that he did not experience any conflicts as he understood this to be 'like playing', and not 'religious'. A Christian informant referred to her Heart and Soul experience cautiously as 'it can be fun if you do it once'.

Despite the presence of religious elements – objects, texts and customs – that are sometimes used or recycled by green spirituality, it seems that these do not transplant from the respective tradition they once belonged to and onto the green artistic collage as viable cells. If eco feminists bring along a Buddhist bell or a Jewish ram horn at a conference on Climate Change, the function and usage of these artefacts are quite different in this context. Can we still see them as religious paraphernalia despite the fact that perhaps the majority of those present will probably be unaware of or indifferent to their original purpose? We may suggest that green spirituality is not a neighbouring category to religion, but a competitive secular/ atheistic one. It aims to sediment itself on the territory previously occupied by religion, to legitimise the Green Movement

artistically, and even offer newcomers a substitute for a collectively shared aesthetic, emotional and contemplative dimension. In this my findings support Bron Taylor's contention, that dark green religion

[...] is reinforced and spread through artistic forms that often resemble, and are sometimes explicitly designed, as religious rituals. It seeks to destroy forms of religiosity incompatible with its own moral and spiritual perceptions (Taylor, 2010:ix).

Based on my findings green spirituality does not destroy incompatible forms of religiosity through eliminating them completely or standing against them openly, but by transforming them from inside out. The postmodern freedom of playfully improvising upon religious symbols and practices chips away at their awe and solemnity. For example Christian activists disagreed whether it was right to read the *Last Rites* at the Kingsnorth power station (Climate Camp, 2008) – as a symbol of its imminent death. Some Christians opposed this suggestion, on the grounds of the solemnity associated with this Christian sacrament (traditionally used for anointing the sick or dying). There is often a subtly irreverent relationship between green spirituality and religious traditions. Ecological rituals abound in satirical interpretations of traditional faiths (not as a new phenomenon but more on Chaucerian lines): for example activists dress as nuns and priests or simulate wedding ceremonies to raise awareness about ecological issues. As I already emphasised in my literature review, environmentalism is in essence countercultural and thus will seek to provoke a shift in the present culture and its political and religious institutions. Not only it is set against the present culture but it is also millenarian, as it envisages a new and better one. If religion is perceived to be divisive, spirituality is in turn a promise for inclusiveness. As Anna King (1996) contends in her article 'Spirituality: Transformation and Metamorphosis', spirituality:

[...] is more firmly associated than religion with creativity and imagination, with change, and with relationship. It is less associated in the popular mind with hierarchies of gender, race or culture. It indicates an engagement with, or valuing of human experience and expression through art and music, through a response to nature and to ethical ideals as well as through the great religious traditions. It can embrace secular therapies and cosmologies

as well as concerns with the environment. Thus it seems to include both sacred and secular, and to enable a fundamental rethinking of religious boundaries (King, 1996: 346).

In the context of my research field the quest for community and a common spirituality is a common quest. Developing 'the self' is no longer the central spiritual aim; instead the emphasis falls on community and shared values. The search for individual wellbeing becomes in this context dependent on planetary healing and wellbeing. Spirituality, detached from faith, can permeate, can freely travel over boundaries, including secular/ religious boundaries, and aims to become the common currency in plural communities. Green spirituality is not necessarily restricted to certain 'spiritual' contexts as it can make its way around under the guise of artistic expression. Through its plasticity and fluidity this spirituality can infiltrate and adapt to both secular and religious contexts.

Often inter-faith or multi-faith events organised by transitioners will have an emphasis on celebration and artistic expression, being an opportunity for cultural exchanges. Similarly Green Muslims organising events where non Muslims are likely to take part will concentrate on offering things that can be enjoyed in the context of our contemporary multi-cultural celebratory discourse without posing any real dilemmas to personal religious beliefs or ethical concerns, such as henna painting or ethnic food that is vegetarian or vegan for example. Transition festivals and processions may provide further insight into civic religious rituals. The emphasis seems to be on creativity and artistic expression, which may qualify as the equivalent of a secular spirituality.

Green spirituality may be conceptualised in this context as a global form. As I already discussed in Chapter 3, global forms have a capacity of de-contextualisation and re-contextualisation, abstract ability and movement, across diverse social and cultural situations and spheres of life (Collier & Ong, 2005: 11). Green spirituality is thus apt to travel between the sacred and the secular, representing perhaps the connective tissue or the blood of the Climate and Transition Movements. It is not restricted to either religious or secular networks and by being able to travel between the two and ensure cooperation and influx of new themes it contributes to the aggregation of hybrid secular-religious networks. Furthermore, it may be possible to speculate further that artistic expression is a key propagator in anti globalisation movements or in what Manuel Castells (2000) calls the dynamic networks of a network society (see Chapter 1). This may

further explain and support the assumption that this type of spirituality carries subversive elements, as it seeks to dismantle hierarchic organisations and replace them with a more horizontal structure.

Conclusions

The present chapter shows that the networks in my study differ in their experimentation with collective spirituality and community. I argued here that these differences further separate the networks to a degree that makes participants demarcate their adherence to a particular network – i.e. a CEL member may take part in Work That Reconnects, and may think it was fun ('if you do it once', as one informant put it), but these practices will most likely not be the preferred mode of expression for him or her and they will belong to CEL even when they partake in another network. However I also showed that there is a connective tissue or a common spiritual currency – predicated on artistic expression – that allows for the transmission of ideas and practices among networks that would not otherwise exchange ideas and practices as freely, such as the Climate network, made up by both secular and religious networks. I suggested that green spirituality may be conceptualised as a global form.

This may seem to endorse the much contested organism metaphor but in fact it dismisses the real existence of the organism all together. The networks communicate with each other, but maintain their boundaries. The Climate Movement is not one organism any more than everyone in a carnival parade is one organism, although they are clearly coming together for a common reason. This is a perfect example for the 'relations of exteriority' in assemblage theory (DeLanda, 2006:10). The Climate Movement is only one centre of gravity for the networks that take part in climate related activities. Some of these networks are already taking part in the Occupy Movement, where the centre of gravity is changed and the neighbouring networks are all different. Future research might indicate how these new assemblages affect the networks in this study. We can speculate that common artistic themes may aid not only communication between the networks currently aggregated, as per my network model, but also transmission though a sense of diachronic shared values between the Rainbow Movement and the Climate Movement for example.

The next and last chapter in this thesis will examine a very important mode of expression and performance for both spirituality and community: ritual.

CHAPTER 8

ECOLOGICAL RITUAL

The present chapter will investigate the roles and functions of ecological rituals in the climate networks I have researched. It examines the differences between rituals performed by faith networks and rituals performed at Climate Camp and in the context of the Transition Towns Movement. The following chapter, Chapter 9, will further investigate the role of ritual in the performance of identity and in stimulating an affective process through which participants can either relate to a given group, community or tradition or form new relationships with the planet or a planetary community.

Ecological Rituals in Climate Networks

In the previous chapter I showed that the different networks in my study differed in their attitude towards community and spirituality. This is of course also true of ritual. Recently scholars have attempted to eschew the religious/secular divide by using the term 'performance' rather than 'ritual' for its more inclusive connotative field (see Bell, 1998: 205). Since the boundary between religion and the secular is the subject of much academic debate, I will use emic descriptions of what constitutes the religious and the non-religious, for the purpose of this chapter. For example, Christian Ecology Link is a self-identified religious network, whereas a group of transitioners will most commonly identify itself as non-religious or secular. An investigation of ecological rituals across the field can contribute to a broader understanding of its role and functions and can deepen the analysis of the networks in my study.

(1) Eco Rituals in Faith Networks

Most of my data on ritual was gathered in Christian settings, as the Muslim informants were a lot more dissociative between their activism on one hand and prayer on the other. The Muslim

informants did not invite everyone to take part in the prayers (because of the language difference and perhaps even a certain ingrained acceptance of their minority status) and would customarily use a different room to pray in or offer tea and coffee in the kitchen concomitantly with prayer time. The Muslim group were a lot less ritualistic compared to the Christian informants and although meetings, forums, actions often started and ended with a prayer this was normally a short recitation from the Qur'an followed by silent prayer and reflection. The Muslim group was a lot keener to attract non-Muslims as well as Muslims, and perhaps a more ritualised programme would have discouraged the many Christians who often came to the forums – at times in equal numbers as the Muslims. Individually some Muslim participants in my research would take part in 'Work That Reconnects' type of events but describe these as purely lay explorations. Asked in an open forum if such spiritual or meditative Deep Ecology practices were dissonant with Islamic precepts, one informant explained that he understood the former as simple 'play', which we forget to do as adults. In this case, as I discussed previously, 'play' and the solemnity of religious practices are kept separate.

The three Christian networks in my study took different approaches to ritual. I have no actual data from group participation in rituals for the GreenSpirit network but I have observed and participated in numerous rituals with Isaiah 58 at Climate Camp and with CEL during retreats, conferences, meetings, protest events. According to one GreenSpirit member, the network had a very prolific ritual phase in the last decade that has however begun to wane during the last few years. Rites such as 'The Cosmic Walk' and 'The Council of all Beings' (see Appendix 1) are still offered with great reverence during some retreats. Yet my informant explained that rather than focusing on performing rituals, some GreenSpirit members are more interested in understanding the role of ritual by discussing it in workshops and private meetings. With the advent of eco-psychology in GreenSpirit quarters, members are keen to reflect on ritual and its psychological implications for the individual and society. In a similar way all the participants in my research (faith groups, transitioners and climate campers alike) seemed to reflect on the rituals they perform in a way that coincides with our modern secular methods of planning, reflecting, debriefing with the aim of improving performance in contemporary institutions. After all these networks were

mostly 'outside' of their customary institutions, churches and mosques, and so, in a way, they had more at their disposal: workshops, retreats, conferences, festivals etc.

As with 'New Age', the workshop itself is a place for ritual. Workshops involve a high degree of exploration and plasticity. The outcome has not been decided yet, the ritual is not finalised, it will however be 'worked out' during the workshop, the participants will have a chance to 'remember', 'rediscover' or 'connect' with the aid of a specially trained guide:

Titled "Authenticity and Awe" this weekend will be a time for connecting with the Magic within us all which we sometimes forget how to experience. [I.G.] who combines mind-bending magic with mythology, storytelling and humour will be with us this weekend to help us continue to be Enchanted with Life, to connect with the otherworldly and with our feelings of magic and self worth. (GreenSpirit website)

Similarly 'retreats' are also popular and highly ritualised events for all the faith groups I have researched. The 'retreat' also involves an opportunity for transformation, in essence abandoning the world so that one may come back to it with a fresh perspective. Retreats also provide opportunities for Christian participants to organise their own sacred space, a praying room or an altar like the one in the picture below (fig. 20). The 'retreat' is in a way congruent with the minority status Green Christians or Green Muslims have in the greater community. It provides them with the opportunity to express their ecological beliefs which are otherwise unrepresented in more mainstream settings. It also provides an opportunity to organise space in ways that reflect the group organisation; for example in the picture below the chairs were arranged in a circle around the altar. In other instances Green Christians would give each other communion rather than receive it from a vicar. This may be interpreted as an aspiration towards a less hierarchical organisation of the Christian community which accords with the central precepts of the Climate Movement.



Fig. 20 Altar at eco retreat organised by Christian Ecology Link, Suffolk 2009

A shared practice in eco ritual performed by members of different religious traditions is the use of 'nature' materials in rituals. Here (fig. 20) the altar has been decorated with cones, leaves, stones and feathers alongside more traditional altar furnishings such as candles and prayers. The altar coverings, green and blue, might also signify water and earth.



Fig. 21 'Moving Mountains' ritual, Suffolk, 2009

The second picture depicts the room where the altar was placed. This is the main room where participants gathered daily during this retreat, at Ringsfield, Suffolk, in 2009. In the background there is a big poster of the planet earth, there are chairs all around the room, again with the altar in the centre of this space. Besides the altar there is a pile of stones placed next to a big shoe, and in front of it there is a small shoe. The small shoe happens to be my son's, Owain. Three other children came to this Christian retreat, as parents were given the possibility to take turns with childcare and attend the workshops. In the great manor house, with beautiful surrounding grounds, the children hardly needed to be baby-sat. They were often at our feet playing quietly or running wild in the gardens.

The pile of stones in the background was in this case a symbol of the difficult task of shrinking our carbon footprint. The picture depicts the setting before the enactment of the 'Moving Mountains' ritual, on the last day of our stay. The ritual followed a day of workshops and discussions, with other opportunities for dramatic expression. In this ritual, accompanied by the music of a viola, participants were asked to move a stone from the pile next to the big shoe, which symbolised our big carbon footprint, to the small shoe. The title, 'Moving Mountains', refers to the difficult task of shrinking our carbon footprint. This ritual was created by a CEL member, in 2007. As she explained to me, this ritual was created to empower participants, as they can imagine moving mountains with every stone. It can also be suggested, that the ritual teaches the patience and collective effort necessary in fighting Climate Change.

Participants assembled in a line and proceeded to move the stones, walking slowly, in a contemplative mood. As the little children were also in this room, they were also encouraged to take part. I told my son, who was then four years old, that he had to take a stone and move it from the big shoe to the small shoe. He did it in his own personal style: like an aeroplane, arms open, flying at a dangerous angle to the ground.

The ritual ended when all the stones formed a new pile next to Owain's small shoe. The music stopped and our host (who was also a vicar, and the spiritual leader of CEL) praised the children for participating. He told us all that Owain had got the point of this, and that we all had to learn from him. We couldn't move mountains if we were 'dragging our feet'. We had mountains to

move, and we had to do it joyfully and celebratory, 'like an aeroplane'. We can see that, just like Transition Towns, the emphasis here is on 'fun' and 'celebration', a point that the vicar visually emphasised in his concluding speech, doing the 'aeroplane' himself.

Green Christians speak of being 'rejuvenated' by such experiences, where they have opportunities to ritualise their environmentalism. However, their own church is equally very important, more so for CEL than GreenSpirit members. Two GreenSpirit members, whom I will call Neil and Jane, attended both the Sunday service in their local Christian church as a means of maintaining relations with their local community, in Lancaster, and also the monthly deep ecology meetings offered by GreenSpirit network in a nearby town. They also participated sporadically in many other ecologically oriented events. Neil told me during one interview: 'Jane feels more spiritual doing the Inter-faith Peace Circle dancing than what they do in the church [sic].' She was also involved with the Unitarian church, whose members were in turn involved in Transition Towns.

This might lead us to question how the profundity of a ritual needs to be measured, if at all, on a religious scale. Where shall we look for 'the religious'? Is the distinction between religious and secular dependent on the venue itself, in this case the church building as opposed to an old barn that was regularly used for circle dancing? Or is it dependant on its success in conjuring spiritual feelings in the individual participant? In the academic debate on ritual, there are some scholars like Kieran Flanagan (2005) who would argue that rituals need to be meant or meaningful to qualify as rituals. In Jane's case the barn and circle dance represented the spiritual whereas the church and church service represented the secular, as she attended the Sunday service out of obligation and for practical reasons: that of maintaining good relations with her community of place.

Informants felt differently about the task of mixing their religious practices with new ecological practices, or eco-hybridising Christianity or Islam. Some Christian participants felt uneasy about improvising on particular ritualised actions. For instance, the suggestion that the Christian group could read 'The Last Rites' at Kingsnorth (which would symbolise the death of the power station) was rejected by some activists as they felt this would be disrespectful. In interviews,

some Christian informants reflected negatively on being part of ‘unstructured’ rituals that were put together by fellow Christian participants. As the groups I researched were highly heterogeneous in terms of denominations (Catholics, Anglicans, Salvation Army, etc) and in some respects general background, there were some disagreements on how inventive one could be in using ritual.

Free prayer – people spontaneously praying aloud for whatever or whoever represented a concern for them at the time – was in turn something that most were comfortable with. Green prayers often preserve some traditional elements that are recognisably Christian, in form, and innovate more on content. The prayer below was part of a closing service during an Eco Christian conference on sustainable transport:

Prayer of Confession

Leader: ‘Giver of Life

In the midst of a plundered earth/ poisoned water/ polluted air/ mountains of waste....

We groan with creation

All: Have mercy on us.

The format is therefore that of a regular Christian service, with responses from the congregation and formal proceedings indicated by the prayer guide. This structure may be familiar to most Christian denominations, although some Christians, such as Salvation Army or Quakers, would not be using this structure. The content of this prayer, however, is ecological. It laments the plundered earth, poisoned water, polluted air, mountains of waste. It also associates the congregation, or by extrapolation the Christian community or humanity, with the rest of creation, which shrinks the more traditional division between humans and the rest of earth’s inhabitants.

A Christian hymn sung by the Christian Ecology Link congregation on the eve of the Copenhagen Summit, 2009, also contains this ecological message of interdependence and moreover recognises our earthly provenance:

Oh mother earth

We take to Copenhagen

Our last, our deepest hope of all,

To live within our means, no more delay, gone are the heady days

When men could steal and stall

Now look ahead, you delegates of nations,

And see our children, what their lives are worth –

To live at last in knowing we're relations,

Christ's family and offspring of our mother earth.

We may note that most written references to 'the earth' or 'mother earth' are not capitalised, which preserves the distinction between 'God' and its creation. The earth, albeit recognised as mother, it is yet not given divine status, as would happen in a Pagan context for example. However "mother earth" is addressed in this prayer directly ("oh, mother earth"), and thus it is a means of relating directly to the earth and create a personal relationship with it. Prayers are evidently addressed to God. By substituting God with "mother earth", Green Christians are re-engaging personally and emotionally with the planet. This may be the most poignant example for my theoretical model on relational and emotional identity and the socio-cognitive model of transference presented in Chapter 3. The devotee is here addressing in prayer a new divinity: mother earth. More so, addressing the earth as mother stimulates an affective process of transferring affective content.

Walter Brueggemann's (1980) functional approach to the biblical psalms is useful in this context. According to this author, the psalms can be divided between three main categories: psalms of orientation that embrace or accept the given order of things, psalms of disorientation which lament, reject or question the present order and finally psalms of re-orientation which offer a new order, and 'signal a movement from the disorientation marked by the lament' (Brueggemann, 1980 quoted by Basson, 2006: 21). Some ecological prayers represent literal expositions of what it is necessary for us to do, resembling psalms of re-orientation.

In other prayers, like in the following example, the clauses of the second and third verses carry through both the lament and the promise of a new order. The lament is also present at a prosodic level, and achieved through the use of formal chorused church intonation.

All: Grant us power to use our intellects with wisdom,

to cut our use of energy and live more simply,

and to share our technology and resources

In humility and love with all God's children.

Although many of the rituals had a high degree of creativity or innovation through incorporating an ecological message, or by being planned the day before or spontaneously enacted, there were clear ways of drawing sap from a tradition or remembering a certain community. In the case of political rituals enacted by the Christian anarchists, the content was very political, the tone however was again what one would expect to hear in a Christian congregation. For instance the leading person would say '*with corporate greed*', and the group would all answer '*we would not comply*', which in terms of format and tone is very reminiscent of a typical Anglican or Catholic congregation. Ritual form and structure may be used as links to a primary religious identity, as they provide the possibility of anchoring the ritual in the respective tradition. Again, this could further be looked at through the socio-cognitive model of transference, or a means of creating a safe frame for learning new attitudes and behaviour.

(2) Eco Rituals at Climate Camp



Fig. 22 On the way to the power station, Kingsnorth 2008

The picture above (fig. 22) captures the energy of a protest march where Climate campers are marching towards Kingsnorth power station on the main day of Direct Action. The leader of the

drummers changes the rhythm every few minutes using hand movements. The changes in rhythm are felt by everyone and as a participant observer I reflected in my diary that being part of the march is a powerful and empowering experience. The drums unite the march, giving it one heart beat, a beat that everyone in the march joins. This type of event assembles the diverse networks into one procession, and so, albeit temporarily and ephemerally, into one 'Climate Movement'.

The Climate Camp could be considered to function as a central hub for the climate networks, and thus rituals in this setting are worthy of careful investigation. In general protest camp rituals are more aptly described as performances, as they more clearly fulfil a double role - that of consolidating the group and also that of impressing their wants and opinions onto an audience. A protest camp is in essence a huge perpetual stage. I am not suggesting that protesters only perform for their audience but they are certainly continuously watched during the protest by police, authorities, the media and (by extrapolation) everyone.



Fig. 23 Protestor singing at 'the gates', Climate Camp Kingsnorth 2008



Fig. 24 Christians praying at the gates of Kingsnorth Power Station, Kingsnorth 2008

In the first picture (fig. 23) the protesters are singing at ‘the gates’ (the physical delineation of the protest camp) as they wait for the Metropolitan Police to arrive. In the knowledge that they will be removed and possibly arrested very soon, they are maintaining a calm appearance by singing rather cheerful and calm protest songs. In the second picture (fig. 24) we have the Christian group sitting in a circle at the actual gates of Kingsnorth and praying around an effigy of the power station on top of which they placed an apple as a symbol of nature growing on the ruins of destruction. This small group of Christians are sitting at the periphery of the larger group of protesters gathered in front of the power station during the ‘Day of Action’, and so the prayers are somewhat muffled by the bigger crowd.

Faith groups often offer rituals that run concomitantly with the main event, yet take place in close proximity to it. This may constitute a spatial claim or indicate a ‘disputed territory’ – as Marion Bowman (2004) writes in her discussion of concomitant mirror processions held by Christians and Goddess worshipers in Glastonbury as a means to assert identity. Spatial proximity invites participants to carefully guard and maintain their own identity.

In interviews I asked the Christians activists about their ritual at the gates of Kingsnorth and a few acknowledged the fact that by running concomitantly with the speeches, their own ritual appeared to compete for attention. One activist told me:

It was a little awkward I think. There was a sense that we were in opposition with what the other climate campers were doing, because they were doing speeches and things like that. But we had to go ahead with it because we only had a limited period of time.

Another activist explained about this ritual:

We didn't want what we did to be a play. I mean we did think about costumes and things like that, but we wanted to be there praying, in spirit and in truth [...] we wanted to do something that would set us apart and bring Jesus in the situation.

The above quotation really captures what this group of Christians needed to do when surrounded or engulfed by a bigger network. They needed to set themselves apart and reconnect with their own Christian identity. This again very clearly supports my position on the activists' primary identity, outlined in Chapter 3. By inviting Jesus in the situation, this group also invoke a spiritual dimension which is otherwise missing for them in secular events, making them less satisfying.

It is perhaps important to note that at Climate Camp the Christian group held all its services inside the Christian Café tent, hence spatially separated from the rest of the camp. On the other hand other, non-religious activists participated in rituals that were happening outside, on the main field or in the kitchens. The pictures below (fig. 25 & 26) depicts an occasion where activists attempt to learn the steps for a Bolivian dance ritual for Mother Earth (*Pachamama*).

This activity had two main parts. During the first many campers joined the Bolivian group for a song and dance, and the steps were quickly explained to everyone. In the second part, participants were explained the meaning of the ritual. The dance followed the sowing and growth of crops. In the second picture from the Bolivian ritual, the two leading ladies are teaching campers the steps of the dance.



Fig. 25 Bolivian dance for Mother Earth, Climate Camp Kingsnorth, 2008



Fig. 26 Bolivian Dance – learning the steps

The steps are not too difficult but they involve swinging one's hips as you do them, and not all of the campers succeeded in being as gracious as their teachers. However it did pleasantly surprise me that many of the men at Climate Camp were willing to experiment with feminine postures, since the dance was a traditional women's dance. The subversive atmosphere of the camp sat well with not accepting prescribed gender roles that are more rigidly in place in mainstream

society. Clothes were often a way of subverting gender roles. For example a few of the men I saw there wore skirts or in some cases women seemed proud to embrace their ‘natural look’ or rebel against the more painful grooming rituals reserved for women in our society.

The making and procession of a fire dragon at Kingsnorth was an open event that took place in the field and main kitchen (see fig. 15 & 16). Some of the Christian Café informants took part in its procession as well and the pantomime that followed. King Snorth, the dragon, had eaten too much coal and fell sick. He then refused to eat any more coal and got better as a result. By having clowns and children contributing to the enactment, the evening performance was centred on the ludic and carnivalesque (see fig. 27)

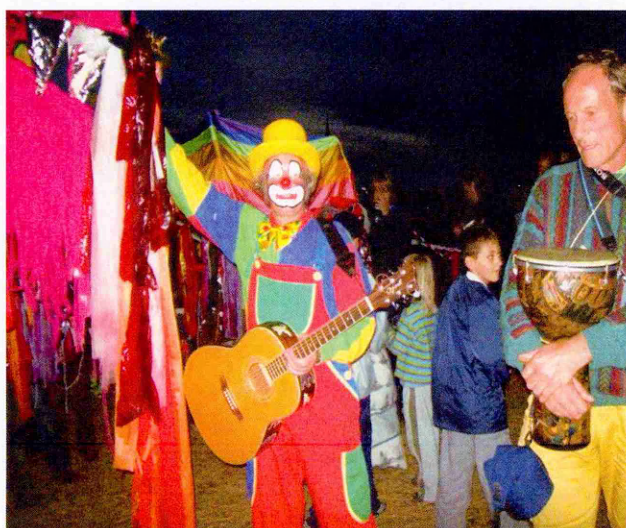


Fig. 27 King Snorth and Clown, Kingsnorth 2008

Yet the dragon was processed more solemnly the following day, ‘the Day of Action’ when it represented the element of fire as activists arrived at the gates of the coal-fired power station riding the elements of fire, water, earth and air respectively processing a fire dragon, by boats, walking and flying kites.

In terms of Schechner’s (Schechner, 1993:25) view of ritual as play or exploration, the whole camp can in fact be seen as such a place – a playground – not meant here in a derogatory way, but as a serious means of learning: a safe frame that can explore a new model for society but perhaps more importantly a new identity. Some of my informants commented on this element of play. One Christian informant called the whole camp ‘a *Wendy house*’ as she reasoned that the life

of the camp could not function in normal, day to day, circumstances. We could perhaps extend the notion of ritual to the entire camp for its entire duration. By being regularly re-assembled the state of liminality is perpetually maintained. The camp is collapsed before liminality has a chance to dissolve and structure to take shape (see Turner, 1969: 132).

At Kingsnorth the protesters lived for two weeks as an anarchic commune, eating an exclusively vegan diet. Being surrounded by police and thus being 'outside of society', the feelings of *communitas* were very easy to form. This utopian space (like other festival spaces that are erected periodically and begin to have a 'tradition' in their punctuated ephemeral existence [Bowman, 2009]) is almost paradoxically very strongly delimited by 'the gates', the boundary is continuously maintained by protestors on one side and police on the other.

The police can also be seen as an audience, the camp as a theatre stage and a deeply liminal space, where the direct confrontation again provokes almost spontaneous entrainment. The motto of the camp was 'They are building fences, we are building a movement'. What better place to build a movement than in a space that has such liminal exposure? Here the camp itself is a stage, the frontline is deeply liminal because it has a magnetic charge. Both the campers and the police have an audience, and neither of them are passively or jovially waiting to be entertained.

The gates are the symbolic representation of the liminal threshold, allowing the confronting parties to cement their strongly demarcated identities. There are many rituals, even in sports, where this confrontation is simulated: two groups face each other with strong identity markers, trying not to entrain with the others, not to drum at the same beat for instance (Clayton et al, 2008). Many of my informants reported 'the gates' as extremely important not only for planned ritual (like praying at the gates) but even in terms of spontaneously perceiving the actions that were underway as ritual. One Christian informant told me that she felt that 'passing tea and biscuits at the gates' was 'like taking communion'. Others simply commented on how important it was to pray at the gates or for the gates. In some respects the gates represented the front line of the camp and people who spent their night in vigil at the gates were often 'prayed for' by the rest of the Christian group.

(3) Transition Rituals

As the Transition Towns Movement is not predicated on protest the ecological rituals I have observed are fully centred on building community. I have already discussed the Work That Reconnects in the previous chapter, which represents the type of deep ecology practice that Transitioners who may be spiritually inclined can partake in. Often transitioners will organise lantern processions and other civic processions in their towns as a means of raising awareness and consolidating the local transition group. Processions to local heritage sites (for example Totnes Castle) support the movements' ethos of promoting locality and bioregionalism.

Although we are not talking about subversion or protest we can see here an element of outward performance: the procession has an audience and often makes clear ecological statements. The woman who organises the bi-annual lantern procession, a Transitioner who was indirectly connected to the GreenSpirit network, told me:

There are giant illuminated figures each year, in 2007 we had the blue Woman of the Waters. She had her train dirty and polluted and by the time we reached the castle she was clean again.

My informant saw the procession of the Woman of the Waters as the rewarding result of a team creative process and as an educational resource. She did not intend any other religious or mythological association. The previous year the giant structure had been a giant tree. The information leaflet states:

Each procession has a story-line created by artists working together, and is dramatized on the night by about three hundred local people including artists, poets, musicians ,dancers, pyrotechnicians and performers ! *Everyone who comes forms part of the procession (there are no spectators behind crash barriers) ...* [my emphasis].

The last sentence here clearly explains that this is not a performance but a procession: 'everyone' takes part. It can be suggested that although the intention is to raise awareness, direct participation takes this to a higher level: the spectator is not only being told a story, he or she is being specifically integrated in its resolution. In a way this resonates with the urgency of the cause,

there is no time to simply raise awareness and await the seeds of this awareness to germinate action, the participant needs to act immediately, join the group at once.

Since the focus is on locality, these processions do not seem to focus on the planet as much as other performances in the climate networks I have researched. In my theoretical model on ritual, proposed in Chapter 3, I argued that place is an important participant in ritual and that the ritual or procession, through memorialisation, engages space into a powerful, central connection with all the participants.

Transition festivals often offer spaces that could be used for prayer or ritual purposes. A Buddha and a Ganesha shrine (figs. 28 & 29 below) could have been set up for meditation, perhaps for green Buddhists or, in the case of the Ganesha shrine, the animal/human/divine becomes a powerful eco-symbol. The Ganesha shrine was placed at the entrance to a tea house, thus creating a sense of ambient spirituality. It can be speculated that exotic religious symbols create a polarity against a dominant faith, i.e. Christianity, which activists and the subversive tone of these movements tend to oppose. New exotic symbols in this case may have a role in re-scripting social meaning in dynamic networks as Manuel Castells (2000) suggests (see Chapter 1). Most likely these symbols are the incarnation of the alternative spirituality of the individual activists who partake in movements of personal and social transformation.



Fig. 28 Buddha shrine, Transition Festival, 2009



Fig. 29 Ganesha shrine, Transition Festival 2009

CHAPTER 9

ECO RITUAL AND THE PERFORMANCE OF ACTIVIST IDENTITIES

In this chapter I examine the affective component present in ritual enactment and suggest that affective remembrance aids in the construction of activist identity. I will follow by investigating ways in which an activist identity is constructed and performed through direct and symbolic actions and how rituals and performances stimulate participants affectively, literally ‘teaching’ them how to ‘care for the earth’. I will end this chapter with a case study of a ‘fast for the planet’ event, which was presented by organisers as ‘a transformative approach to caring for the earth’.

Constructing Identity through Affective Remembrance

I have already looked at ‘oppressed identities’ in Chapter 7, when I discussed ways in which informants separated themselves from modernity by associations with Native American and Celtic spirituality. Similarly, Climate Camp’s reclaiming of the Diggers Movement and other oppressed throughout history are widespread means of claiming a subversive tradition, and therefore an identity.

The frequent associations campers make with other resistance movements, and their subsequent construction of an oppressed identity, often conflicts with Christianity. Admittedly, some eco Christians draw on their own resources of oppressed and resurrected identity, as is the case with Celtic Christianity. Celtic identity might represent a possible linkage in the larger environmental field. Marion Bowman’s (2007) ‘Arthur and Bridget in Avalon: Celtic Myth, Vernacular Religion and Contemporary Spirituality in Glastonbury’ demonstrates that ‘Celtic’ myth has spawned a variegated plurality of (sometimes competing) narratives, thus perhaps qualifying as a loosely shared territory for both Christians and non-Christians in the hybrid networks in my study.

Climate Camp's (2009) Version of The Digger's Song (referring to the Digger Movement as it has been discussed in a previous chapter) illustrates the above mentioned conflict between the anti-religious and the eco-religious activists.

This Earth divided we will make whole

So it will be a common treasury for all.

The sin of property we do disdain,

No man has any right to buy and sell the Earth for private gain [...]

They make the laws to chain us well

The clergy dazzle us with heaven

Or they damn us into hell

We will not worship the god they serve

The god of greed who feeds the rich while poor folk starve.

A more invisible separator between faith activists and non-religious activists is in some respects the mood and affective state performed during ritual enactment. I would frequently leave the Christian tent and experience the rest of the Camp as the school yard: finally the class is over I can have my break now. Inside the tent and during worship the solemnity of the participants during Taizé singing – admittedly punctuated by moments of relaxation – conveyed a mood that was unfamiliar and uncomfortable to me. The songs themselves did not awaken or solicit any superior feelings or emotions other than a constant worry that I was out of tune, too loud or too quiet. Sitting in a circle in a small tent meant that I could not really get up and leave if I had enough. Politeness dictated to stay till the end. This was of course not the case in an open/ multi-functional space (like a kitchen for instance, or an outdoor setting) where one could come and go as one pleased.

It could be contended that religious prayers and by extension protest songs, serve not only as vehicles of communication and expression but also as roots that absorb memories and morphemes of identity, which accords with Daniele Hervieu-Léger's (2000) thesis of religion as a chain of

memory. It seems plausible to assume that they do so not only through content, as the content is continuously usurped and re-interpreted, but through elements of prosody.

In poetry and prose we already have the means of looking at meter or rhythm and observe that for instance the iambic pentameter gives the poem a joyous feel because of its galloping rhythm and so on. There have been experimental psychological studies about the affective value of sounds in poetry (Hevner, 1937), which advanced that even when the meaning is nullified or obscured, if the meter or inflection are preserved then the reader can understand the mood of the poem, whether it is cheerful, sad, serene, and so on. For example, listening to a recitation of Baudelaire can induce a feeling of melancholy or nostalgia even if the listener does not understand any French. Various sociological approaches to ritual (Hatfield et al, 1994) talk about conformity not only in beliefs but also subtle behaviour and mood, such as facial tone, facial expression, level of energy or apathy.

Considering this last point, could the camp as a whole be seen as *communitas* given the fact that it had such a demographic mix? There was most definitely no conformity of beliefs, there were workshops and kitchens where people were sharing their beliefs rather than having the sacred canopy of a shared system of meaning (Berger, 1967). Yet at 'the gates' of the camp, where protesters met the police, there were ritual situations where people were singing and, as I exemplified above, oppression could perhaps factor among other remembered collective emotions. This was concurrent with a palpable revolutionary enthusiasm. People's joviality and goodwill was reminiscent of a religious community where everyone is that extra bit kinder and more helpful. As everything is achieved through donations and volunteering, there was a lot to do in the camp and most people gladly did the hard work of erecting a whole village overnight and maintaining its proper running. Freedom was often emphasised by mocking formal language and by superimposing jargon.

The free spirited enthusiasm, the use of jargon and imposed lack of formality of the rest of the camp are to some extent equally hard to master by the neophyte. It similarly requires a certain ability to embrace a new discourse. Moreover despite the lack of rules and prescriptions – the camp prides itself for its lack of health and safety notices for instance – rules are extremely well imposed

and the whole camp functions as a precisely regimented whole. At times it could even be compared to an army camp, and the pictures below (fig. 30 & 31) show the training grounds where activists train in climbing fences and resisting arrest.



Fig. 30 Training to resist arrest, Climate Camp Cymru 2009



Fig. 31 Training grounds at Climate Camp, Kingsnorth 2008

This is another separator between religious activists and non-religious ones. The Christian activists could not completely forsake formality with the same readiness other activists were willing to do so. Prayer is a formal mode of expression and to some extent the Christian group could not fully assimilate the free spirited mood of the camp. Although Christians took part in most of the camp activities (vigils at the gates, cooking in the common kitchens, contributing to

workshops and taking part in direct action) they invariably came back to the Christian tent for the Christian service at dusk. Here, in this setting, the group could once again entrain and re-tune; the bonds between their tradition and their individual identities could be re-established and strengthened.

This again supports my argument of a primary identity which is nurtured separately in this case. The activists' primary identity as Christians is reinforced by the non-Christian participants. The group is defined by the 'anti-groups', who compete against the group and threaten to dissolve it, implicitly forcing the group to 'renew their existence' (Latour, 2005: 33-37). The Christian tent, although barely having hay-bales and a table, managed to have an altar in the middle made up by four hay-bales put together and covered with a green cloth (see fig. 32).

The theoretical model on ritual proposed in Chapter 3 is well illustrated here in reference to the invocation of a familiar place and the harmonising of places in this ritual. Ritual is in this case a key way for groups to assert and renew their existence. Ritual is a facilitator of identity, helping groups to reassert an identity through affective remembrance.

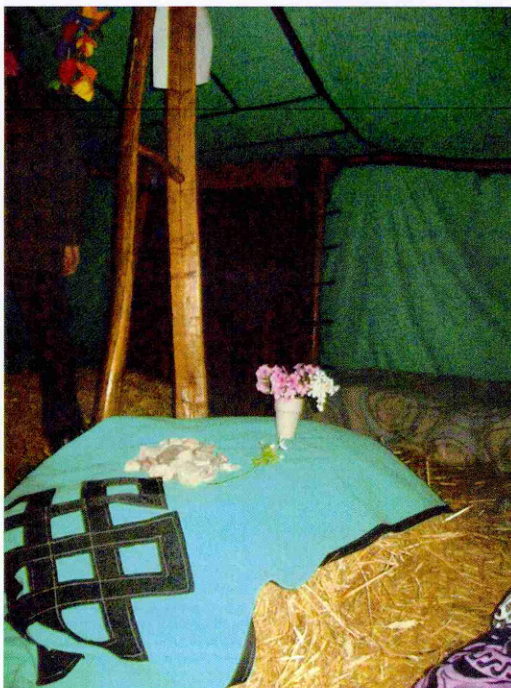


Fig. 32 Altar at Climate Camp with a pile of stones for an alternate version of the Moving Mountains ritual

Direct and Symbolic Action as Means of Constructing and Performing Identity

For many activists direct action has a spiritual dimension and my data indicates that in the Climate Movement direct action is in fact highly ritualised and perceived as an opportunity to create bonds, much like ritual more generally. On occasions activists are involved in direct actions that seem to have purely a symbolic result. Attempting to shut down a power station that is surrounded by police would seem like an impossible task. Yet activists will attempt the action which sometimes becomes a game, again possibly a relatively safe frame to perform one's dissent.

In some cases ritual and prayer may be the only way activists could express their subversion. Hence in a blog about a coming collective protest a Christian activist put down a call to prayer and added in brackets '*with boots on*'. She told me that she could not make an explicit call to direct action and so she implied it by asking fellow Christians to come prepared for action. This is because often religious activists are constrained on how political they can get by the charity status of the organisations they belong to. This is certainly the case with Operation Noah who had to adopt a different ethos, and moved from 'action' to 'education', so that it could be granted charity status and continue to function by receiving donations.

Certainly this polarity, between protest and lifestyle, exists at many levels and I have discussed this in previous chapters (Chapter 4). Similarly in 'fluffy' actions activists will express themselves through symbolic means whilst spiky activists will aim to close a power station. It could be argued that closing down a power station for a few hours, sabotaging machinery and so on are also symbolic although my data suggests that activists do not see these last as merely symbolic and strongly believe in their efficacy. We could discuss this in terms of a ritualisation of protest and also suggest that in some respects in my research field all protest is symbolic and all acts of ritual are subversive.

Both direct action and symbolic action have a common denominator in the performance of an activist identity. Protestors at the gates who banter with police or sing at the gates are performing their protest identity as much as Christian activists praying over an effigy of a power station. The very act of protest involves an unequal power relationship. Admittedly 'asymmetrical status and power roles', as Howard Giles and Nikolas Coupland (1991:9) contend, are just part of

human interactions and are acted out both in language use and 'non-verbal distancing patterns [such as] use of space, gaze patterns', therefore both through the use of space and the body (ibid.).

However in the performance of protest these roles are exacerbated. The police will be standing, feet apart, arms crossed, looking ahead implacably, the protesters in some instances, will be sitting down or lying down. In other cases protesters will stand with their hands up to prevent undue violence. When protest lines are thus formed, police and protestors will not engage each other. Often if protestors attempt to provoke the police by advancing or asking questions, they are either ignored or pushed back into line. For the protestors, the police seem to become a screen or a barrier between themselves and their real audience: the oil and coal industry, the politicians, the corporations, and so on.

In interactions, dialogue involves a process of negotiation, converging or diverging with one's interlocutor. Convergence, which is dependent on power relationships and social status, happens at both a verbal and non-verbal level, often through subtle indicators, such as adopting lexical features or through acts of accommodation (Giles and Coupland, 1991:74). Howard Giles and Nikolas Coupland (1991) further distinguish between upward and downward convergence. For example the worker speaking to his manager will converge upward whereas the teacher speaking to the student will converge downward, to show support, adherence, approval, cooperativeness. The potential cost of convergence involves a loss of 'personal and social identity', particularly if convergence is not reciprocated or long term (ibid.). Divergence, on the other hand is 'loaded in affect', it seeks a reestablishment of power distribution or it involves a display of power. It is non-accommodating and/or confrontational.

Interactions between protesters and police cannot, it seems, include convergence. Risking a loss of personal and social identity is not advisable 'at the gates'. If there is dialogue between protestors and police this often takes the form of 'banter'. Bantering with the police, whilst it may seem non-confrontational, is definitely non-accommodating and divergent. It thus allows 'the gates' to be maintained through an impersonal exchange that maintains the distance and polarity of the field.

I have not recorded any of the banter that goes on – much of it seemed to be about the weather, which is perhaps noteworthy given the fact that protesters were there because of Climate Change. Moreover ‘the weather seems well-suited to filling out those moments in social interaction when people are “avoiding other problems”’ (Robinson cited in Coupland & Yläne ([1999] 2006: 349) or doing ‘timeout talk’ (Coupland 2000 cited in Coupland & Yläne ([1999] 2006: 349.

I have however recorded in my journal an instance when a police officer broke the golden rule and spoke when provoked by a protestor. Both were middle aged women, the police officer was possibly older than the protestor.

The protester: Are you a mother?

The police woman: One minute you talk to me like I am a person, then you talk to me like I am an institution....

Although this is still an example of divergent interaction, it is perhaps interesting to look more closely at it. Both the protester and the police woman are in their middle age so it is very possible that they may have children. The protestor may ask the policewoman if she is a mother because she wishes to redress a power imbalance. She may have inferred that since they both were mothers, then they could be on an equal footing, regardless of other factors. The police woman was the only woman in the line of police officers, so by reminding her of her motherhood she is perhaps reminded that she is a woman, and in a way isolated from the rest of her colleagues. The protester did not carry on asking any of the male officers if they were fathers. However the police woman is quick to spot the problem with answering such a question: she is not there in her role as a mother. If she answers it is likely that she will next be spoken to ‘like an institution’.

If the two women had been at the scene of a violent incident, it is unlikely that her interlocutor would have wanted to know anything about the police woman’s personal life. She would have more likely asked: ‘Are you the police?’ By asking the police woman if she is a mother, the protester primarily seeks to provoke an emotional response. Thus the affective stimulation creates further divergence and hence promotes a re-enforcement of identity.

Relating Affectively to the Planet

According to my discussion of ritual in Chapter 3, ritual can be used to harmonise place or change the coordinates of place, provoking a re-assemblage and re-territorialisation. As I already suggested and exemplified in Chapter 3, the Cosmic Walk ritual (see also Appendix 1) puts the planet in the centre of the universe, thus making it 'one place' and giving it an identity and a cursive history. Participants in this ritual can join in the history of the earth; by walking along this timeline they can become a physical part of it. At the end of ritual the participant can incorporate the history and identity of the planet into their own history and their own personal or group identity.

Activists used prayers to both deplore the ecological crisis and to envision a new ecologically aware time, thus progressing from grieving to celebration. My data indicates that the lament-celebration axis functions as a paradigm for the ecological rituals and prayers I have examined. Religious fasting for the planet also moved participants from lament (in the form of bodily deprivation) to celebration (in the form of eating). In essence, lament and celebration represent the expression of key emotions, namely grief and joy, which are intensified through ritual means (see Davies, 2011: 37-40). Douglas Davies considers grief 'a pivotal emotion' that can provoke 'identity depletion' (Davies, 2011: 95-97), a depletion that may in turn pre-empt the development of a new planetary identity.

Ecological ritual often puts the planet in the centre in a very literal way. For example the globe of the planet is processed and placed on an altar or it simply placed in the middle as a distinct focus for participants (see fig. 33). Other ecological rituals can be seen to integrate the more distant and unseen places or inhabitants of the planet and make them relevant for participants and often for the audience.



Fig. 33 'The Arctic: Mirror of Life', Ilulissat Greenland, 2007, courtesy of Arcon News

By identifying with the planet, its poles or with its arctic inhabitants, participants often take themselves outside of the human race (as it happens in the Council of All Beings – see Appendix 1). In this case activists do not affectively remember a human community of the past as I showed in the previous section, but instead they envisage a larger, planetary community of the future.

Animal masks or animal structures, as in figures 34 and 35 below, have the ability of taking protesters not only on the other side of the gates, but on the other side of humanity. The protesters in the figure 34 walked like penguins, they did not speak, only watched, with simulated, incredulous, curiosity, the actions of the humans on the other side of the gates. Similarly, the activist pictured in figure 35 built himself a transparent polar bear structure. By wearing the masks and by sitting inside these structures, activists do not only show concern for these non-human creatures, but they also show the ecology of our relationships, the opposition towards an oppressive humanity and the vision of a united planetary community. If an activist dressed up as a polar bear is arrested by the police, the media images of a gentle polar bear being dragged by police officer speak for themselves (see Avery, 2012).

Through wearing animal masks activists relate personally to the poles' inhabitants. As with the Council of All Beings, ritualised processions enable participants to experience the other-than-human world and then return to 'the world of the two-legged'. The ritual was a way for participants

to form a connection or personal relationship to another species and have a lived experience of a biocentric worldview. Dressing up, walking, being silent for a few hours and being in the company of fellow human-penguins is a powerful way of personally relating to the climate crisis. This is the power of ritual: to spark a new identity in participants, to make them more than just human or a different sort of humans, planetary-minded-humans.



Fig. 34 Penguins prodding the gates of Kingsnorth power station, 2008



Fig. 35 Polar bear in procession, Climate Camp 2008

Performances where humans act out the animals' voices and the planetary crisis are, as it may be expected, very prevalent in my research field. In a protest staged in front of the Royal Bank of Scotland that took place concomitantly with the Kingsnorth Climate Camp, activists dressed up as seals and laid themselves on the pavement, covered in oil. Through artistic means activists perform the ecological crisis and bring a forgotten or neglected place into full vision. In Chapter 3 I argued that in ritual evoked place acts upon actual place, and that in this way space can be re-territorialised and re-assembled through ritual. Activists bring the planet into full view, they aim to enlarge our vision and empathy, to allow their audience to see further in space and time, and to provoke an affective response, a cathartic transformation that can lead to humans' extended awareness of the earth as one place and one home.

Fast for the Planet: A Case Study

The leaflet pictured the sun gently coming through a clearing in a forest and read: 'You are invited to: 'Fast for the Planet - A transformative approach to caring for the earth'. LINE/WIN members spoke about this practice with great hope. One informant had told me that fasting could be a catalyst for social change and that it had been used in this way by such figures as Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

This event took place in March 2009 and was well prepared in advance by then London Islamic Network for the Environment (now Wisdom in Nature). I was well aware of the effort that went into organising and publicising this event. Members had been asked months in advance to contribute ideas and to help promote it in their local mosques, universities, vegetarian cafes, community notice boards, green circles, etc.

The day was going to start at 4 o'clock in the afternoon at St. Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London, a hub for green events and a place that always managed to keep its doors open for activists during protest marches. We were of course instructed to fast during the day, no water and no food. We were asked to bring vegan food to share and I took with me a loaf of home made bread and some hummus. I also decided to be a real participant observer and to fast as well, so that I could have a better understanding of this event. I did not feel

particularly thirsty, hungry or even conscious of the fact that I was fasting during the day but on the train towards London I started realising that everybody was eating or drinking around me. People were having crisps, coffee, sandwiches and I had a big loaf of bread with me and, by now, a good appetite. I began to feel unreasonably irritated with these 'other' people who could eat their snacks whilst I could not. Fasting thus creates a powerful boundary between those who are fasting and those who are eating, and helps demarcate a group and create a common identity.

I arrived at the centre at 4 pm and went through a hallway where people had left their food on a long wooden table. It smelled divine, there were many ethnic foods, really colourful and with a great spicy aroma filling the corridor. I just could not wait to eat. We went into the main hall where the original pews had been replaced with chairs and we could now sit in a big circle. We were about thirty five to forty people, men and women of all ages, a few wearing traditional ethnic clothes but most of us in casual clothes. I spoke briefly to all the participants about my research and my role there as a participant observer.

The main organisers spoke first to explain what this event was all about. The leaflet had explained the purpose of the gathering as such:

We live on a beautiful planet, and Fast for the Planet is a transformative approach to relating to it. Rather than focussing on a single issue, it draws together a range of supporting values that include the inner (e.g. through fasting), the economic, and community, and weaves them together into a more coherent whole. The experience is fun, empowering, challenging and purposeful! Whilst it allows for the practice of fasting to be connected to the wisdom contained within spiritual traditions, Fast for the Planet is consciously inclusive.

And indeed it aimed to be inclusive. Although there were only Muslims and Christians attending this event, the time for breaking fast was set according to the Jewish tradition. But before we could break our fast and eat we were going to take part in three separate workshops: one on Permaculture, one on green economy or one on sharing stories and poetry. As I now had a great deal of data on Permaculture and green economy, I decided to join the workshop on sharing stories and poetry. Not many people went for this particular workshop and only six or seven of us ended up inside a nice wooden outbuilding, in the back garden of the centre. The person facilitating this

workshop had been a Christian vicar who was now retired and a climate activist, and he told us about his life, charitable work and green values and spoke at length about Climate Change and renewable energy. I was very hungry by now and sitting on the floor on the colourful rugs made me feel very peaceful and very receptive to everything that was being said. I did not wish to speak as if I had no expendable energy left and all I wanted to do was to listen as I felt almost pleasantly numb and only in this state I could ignore my hunger and thirst.

One participant interrupted the vicar rather abruptly and asked angrily if the workshop was going to be about poetry after all. The vicar was too shocked to reply and I felt so bad for him I started explaining to the lady who was visibly annoyed with the content of the workshop that we would be given the opportunity to tell our own stories too. But there was truth in what she had said since nobody had brought any poetry and there had been no mention of it. The workshop continued with the others talking (rather at random) about renewable energy, personal stories, neighbours and spiritual experiences.

When we went back into the main hall, we sat back in a circle and were asked to surmise the content of the workshop we had participated in. I somehow offered to do this and gave some abstract explanation: 'we spoke about our own experience and green values'. But by now I was so hungry I felt pretty indifferent to anything that was being said. We were asked to form small groups and discuss how we could put the things we have learned into practice in our own communities. In my group participants spoke of taking part in their own Transition Town initiative and an activist programme called 'Worldworks' (see Glossary).

Finally somebody came around with a tray of dates and this was the time when we all silently reflected on the experience of fasting for the planet. The food we were about to eat, we were told, all came 'from the earth' and 'it was the earth'. People queued along the wooden table and filled their plates with colourful food. I was very grateful to be eating and drinking. People brought their plates in the big church hall and all ate sitting down or standing up in little groups. The atmosphere was that of a conference and one participant complained that we were not going to all eat together or have any sort of ritual like the ringing of a bell. But everyone else was simply happy to be eating the tasty mix of vegan food.

On the way back to Bath I wrote in my diary that the evening had been rather emotionally charged because people were obviously more vulnerable and more irritable than they would have normally been. This fasting ritual clearly aimed to stimulate participants affectively and teach a love and appreciation for the planet through experience – through the senses, and through the same lament – celebration mechanism I spoke about earlier in this chapter. Affective stimulation through fasting was the very basis of the environmental teachings conveyed during the workshops on Permaculture and green economy. Without the affective/emotional dimension the workshops would have solely been about facts, but they would not necessarily impact the personal values of the participants.

Conclusions

By examining the interface between ritual and protest, I showed here that ecological ritual is in essence subversive as it contains a critique of the present order of things: the Woman of the Waters is dirty and polluted, the dragon is sick after having had too much coal, etc. The lament of the present order is accompanied by a vision of the new order of the future: the dragon gets better after refusing coal, the Woman of the Waters becomes clean with the mass participation of the townspeople in procession to the castle hill. This lament – celebration axis is also present in religious prayers and songs and in other rituals, such as fasting for the planet. Grieving for the past aims to re-direct attitudes and introduce new values, thus provoking a transformation in participants.

Participants in some ecological rituals are given the opportunity to relate affectively to the planet and its inhabitants, particularly those most affected by Climate Change. I have argued here that direct and symbolic actions are primarily means of constructing and performing activist identity through an affective process. A protest site is a highly confrontational setting that brings together opposing forces. The gates of the protest camp become the stage where identity is performed. On one hand it seems that this deeply liminal space stimulates the proliferation of ritual behaviour or ritual perception. On the other hand, the state of liminality is itself induced by the state of conflict/confrontation inherent to the act of protest. Thus activists perform and construct

their identities through affective stimulation induced by verbal and non verbal acts of divergence. The act of protest is the ultimate act of divergence, as one openly expresses dissent. By performing their oppressed planetary identities, activists acquire a tradition, a collective history, and aim to provoke a cathartic transformation in the audience/ oppressor.

Prayers often provided activists with the opportunity to restructure their faith by retaining the external form of the prayer and inserting an environmental message in this template, thus literally 'injecting faith into the subject of climate change', as one informant put it. Moreover prayer and ritual enabled activists to engage affectively with these green issues and frame them into 'the pattern of emotions' of their respective tradition. This re-structuring of faith could be so powerful as to cause a permanent schism between the old beliefs and practices, and the new ones, leading participants into a possible eco-reformation.

CONCLUSIONS

My thesis investigated the involvement of four religious networks in the Climate and Transition Towns Movements in Britain. For this purpose I examined (1) how the networks in my study operated in their encounter with or as part of the Climate and Transition networks. I further enquired (2) what were the processes of hybridisation that took place through these encounters and exchanges and (3) how did the faith networks maintained their separate faith identity in collective contexts. Finally I investigated (4) the functions of ecological ritual in relation to processes of identity formation (or identity preservation) and place-making practices.

The research field has been an incredibly fast moving one. My research provides a snapshot of the Climate Movement in its pre-Copenhagen accession (until December 2009) and post-Copenhagen plateau, over the three years I have observed it: 2007-2010. In this interval the Climate Movement, initially predicated on protest, has progressively moved towards lifestyle, as its strong interdependence with the Transition Towns Movement proves. When I started my research the activists I was following were on 'the front line' at the gates of Kingsnorth. In 2011 the Climate Camp announced that it will not be holding any gatherings due to 'recent political, social and economic unrest'. However, as I conclude my thesis in 2012, anyone can have 'Carbon Conversations with a group near you' ('Carbon Conversations', 2012). We can speculate that, like other social movements, the Climate Movement will eventually become integrated in society, perhaps like gender equality policy and its representatives have come to reflect the societal gestation of the Women's Movement.

Both the Climate and Transition Movements are global movements as they benefit from global involvement. Conserving or preserving a locality alone is not possible with Climate Change. If the road protests of the 90s aimed to protect places of significant ecological, patrimonial or spiritual value, Global Warming has shifted the emphasis to the planet. 'Think globally, act locally' is therefore an interesting curve (from local to global and back again) that can be followed in climate and transition discourse. According to two surveys which I administered in England and

Wales for which I had 78 respondents, the Climate Movement has attracted a large participation from those previously not involved with environmentalism (37 of respondents were new activists representing 48% of all activists surveyed) and also from younger people as 51% (40 activists) of those who responded to my survey were aged 16 to 25, representing the largest age band among participants.

Transition Towns aims to offer a self-sufficient model for a post-carbon society, a society made up by communities where religious, political and social divisions have been broken down. Among the various groups it establishes, a Transition town will also have a 'Heart and Soul' group which is in fact a space for the spiritual or artistic needs of a given community. The Heart and Soul takes various guises depending on the organisers and their spiritual or religious proclivities. It often has a 'spiritual but not religious' character, although it can be as secular as a book club (as in Transition Bath). The Work that Reconnects, a Deep Ecology practice, is often used in Heart and Soul groups. The Work that Reconnects is described as a tool for empowerment, giving activism a spiritual component, and helping individuals to take on the challenge of acting on Climate Change. Although not all transitioners will be open to such practices, many will participate or will become tangentially involved in them through other connections within the movement.

The shift from local to global can be noticed in a preoccupation with the planet. The planet is often represented in iconographical styles or personified as sick, incarcerated, revengeful or feverish. Concomitantly, place and locality are not so much imbued with spiritual significance as they would have been during the 1990s, when eco Pagan warriors were at the forefront of the environmental movement in Britain. Instead Transition Towns draws attention to the local in a more secular or civic oriented way, by using historical and cultural landmarks (Glastonbury Tor, Totnes Castle) that can more readily appeal to both the mainstream and perhaps alternative factions.

Both movements are in essence white middle class movements. This is a self-identified trait which activists often discuss during workshops with a view to engage a more diverse participation. Acts of solidarity with other movements and organisations (like support for the Vestas syndicate on the Isle of White in 2009) serve both the socialist ideology of the activists and the purpose of

building bridges with working class networks. The Muslim climate activists on the other hand often see being green as an opportunity to dissolve black and white boundaries and perhaps as an opportunity for integration – yet they do have to ‘culturally commute’ as one informant put it, between Islam and Deep Ecology, even in terms of food practices: meat eating versus veganism for instance.

Transition Towns has brought optimism to the Climate Movement. Permaculture design accords well with Climate Change, as it focuses on learning from nature and constantly adapting to a changing environment. It thus provides a template for acting in an environment that is perceived as dangerous, unstable and diminishing in resources. Its focus on Peak Oil and the present recession are often used as steps to approaching the subject of Climate Change. Although these concerns are real, my data suggests that financial concerns raised by the recession are not in fact paramount to transitioners. They operate as framing processes, to help align the aims of the movement with the concerns of the unengaged public. This is also suggested by the efforts made by transitioners to convey their message across social class and ethnic boundaries.

The four faith networks I have researched have also changed considerably in this time interval (2007-2012). Isaiah 58 has more or less dissolved, some members have since joined other Christian activist networks, such as ‘Speak’ which began in 2009. The Muslim group, London Islamic Network for the Environment (in 2008), underwent the most visible metamorphosis as the activists became increasingly distanced from the original protest vision, and became fully focused on the Permaculture model of living, which culminated with the network changing its name to reflect this in 2010 to ‘Wisdom in Nature’. Christian Ecology Link also embraced Permaculture through its connections with the Transition Towns Movement and in 2009 the network also launched their ‘Churches in Transition’ campaign. The campaign aims to involve Christians and Christian congregations in the Transition Towns Movement and to build bridges of cooperation with the other Transition networks. Operation Noah, Christian Ecology Link’s sister organisation, shifted its ethos most dramatically, going from protest and opposing the government to educating children about Climate Change. During the past few years many more Christian, Islamic and Jewish groups have made Climate Change one of their main areas of focus. Some big Christian

charities and networks, such as Christian Aid for example, who already focuses on alleviating poverty in third world countries, have begun to take part in climate marches. However, the four networks I have investigated are more than just supportive of new legislation to combat Climate Change. They are part of the Climate Movement, by sharing beliefs, practices and lifestyle choices.

To understand the dynamics of the networks in my study, the processes of cross-fertilisation which take place, the effects of these crossings on activists' identity/identities and, finally, the functions of eco-ritual, I put forward a theoretical models of networks in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Drawing on assemblages theory and ANT theory, I proposed that the networks operating under the climate umbrella can be analysed using an attractor model. I used the term attractor from the fields of Mathematics and Physics because it best described two main properties of these aggregated networks: (1) the networks were all (temporarily) oriented towards the same central focus – which in this case is Climate Change and (2) the dissipative system thus formed by the aggregated networks would tend to evolve towards a common set of properties. I advanced that this process is sustained by the use of global forms and the existence of a central web maker or a strategist - designer hub. The spaces that are created through this process become what Paul-Françoise Tremlett calls 'imaginary communities' that experiment with the moral dimensions of an 'alternative globalism' (see Tremlett, 2012).

My second theoretical model posited that faith identity constitutes a primary identity for religious activists. The model draws on the socio-cognitive model of transference to analyse how new discourse is appropriated by activists and how cross-fertilisations between the networks in my study take place. The socio-cognitive model of transference is centred on the premise that learning is done through an original affective schema and thus through a re-direction of feelings. This model is linked to the concept of relational identity, which considers identity to be an emotional and relational experience, rather than a cognitive representation. This model indicates that faith activists have a primary faith identity through which they can maintain a sense of continuity and uniqueness whilst they can adopt new elements through a process of affective translation or transference.

Finally I proposed that ritual can be conceptualised as a process of re-thinking space/ place through the prism of an existing territory, be it a real earthly one or an imagined cosmic one, and thus lead to a re territorialisation and a re-assemblage of all participants. Drawing on linguistic and sociological studies, I speculated that language had its own terrestrial coordinates of meaning. Through ritual, invoked or evoked place may be understood to become superimposed a new place/space, achieving a 'hyperlocalisation' (Bowman 2005: 165). Ecological ritual, I argued, aims to connect participants to the planet and the planetary community, and extend local identities to planetary identities.

In Chapter 4 I investigated the macro level of my research project, represented by the Climate and Transition Movements. I showed that apart from the protest vs. lifestyle emphasis, we can distinguish the two movements by using the attractor model to further analyse their distinct territories. My data showed that the Climate Movement is a 'new' movement both in terms of ethos and participation. By having a new attractor in Climate Change, a movement, or an aggregation of networks, can re-frame grievances and hence expand in new directions. Although previous environmental campaigns, such as anti-nuclear campaigns of the 80s, the road protests of the 90s, anti GM crops, animal rights and so on, are well represented inside the movement, the Climate Movement has attracted a wider and broader participation: the faith groups I have investigated prove this point. I argued that the Climate Movement could be considered a hybrid secular-religious web which has aggregated a diversity of networks, from religious to atheist/ anti-religious, and from mainstream to alternative.

The collective vision shared by climate activists and/or transitioners is that of a zero carbon society of the future, a society that has become decentralised, bioregional and communitarian (or perhaps cooperative, in TT). Although this vision was there during the 1990s and green communes during this period would have lived out these aspirations hoping to provide a vision for the future, the Climate Movement and particularly the Transition Towns Movement, are far less autonomous in their actions. Moreover in having Peak Oil and local economy/ community building as alternative attractors, the Transition Towns Movement can attract different networks and form different assemblages. Transition Towns has a different web-maker or strategist-designer hub.

However I showed that global forms help the communication between these two networks and identified Consensus decision making and Permaculture design as shared standards in these networks. Permaculture, as ‘the lingua franca of environmentalism’ (Schwartz & Schwartz, 1999), can be considered to constitute a global form precisely because of its very practical implications that convey Permaculture Philosophy: harmony with nature and learning from nature.

Also in Chapter 4 I showed that the Climate and Transition Movements show a departure from what sociologists (Melluci, 1996; Touraine, 1981) called ‘cultural’ social movements. Although the focus on personal transformation is obvious in the Climate and Transition Movements – ‘Be the change you want to see!’ – climate activists and transitioners are not simply content with operating autonomously within a plural society. A zero carbon commune cannot be self-contained as it would not make a difference to Climate Change. Hence these movements aim to convert society, to actually activate the social shift that previous movements (such as the New Age and Human Potential movements) had anticipated. I considered the aims of these movements and argued that although they are focused on personal and social transformation, they can also be understood as acculturative and adaptive movements, thus assisting society to make sense of Climate Change. I further speculated that these movements may be part of a mass anti-systemic global movement or contemporary dynamic countercultural networks that subvert social structure from within giving rise to the reformulations of the Information Age.

Chapter 5 investigated the faith networks in their encounter with the Climate and Transition networks. My second research question (RQ2) asked what were the processes of cross-fertilisation or hybridisation that took place during these encounters between faith activists and the larger environmental networks. In this chapter I showed that CEL and LINE/WIN, who became my main focus, were situated in the middle of the protest vs. lifestyle axis, and as such they were most influenced by both the Climate and Transition Movements. These faith networks attempted to provide a link (hence their name: Christian Ecology Link) between their own religious communities and the Climate and Transition Movements. Yet this service also gave them an in-between status, and the networks needed to often demarcate themselves against ‘the others’, the anti-groups, as I showed in Chapter 2. Their relationships with various religious institutions or

their officials were from an outsider or 'in-between' position too, since attempting to educate officialdom and exert influence from the bottom to the top may be considered an anti-hierarchical statement. I advanced the understanding here that, according to my network model, these networks were pulled in different directions by two (or more) attractors: that of their respective religious institutions and that of the climate networks. Yet this in-between status also allowed these networks to attempt to cross-fertilise the separate fields they were part of: bringing religious or spiritual ideas and practices from their respective traditions to the climate scene, and also bringing environmental ideas and practices to their home churches or other religious institutions.

In Chapter 6 I further examined the religious networks by enquiring into the activists' green faith. My third research question (RQ3) aimed to investigate how activists maintained their faith identity in collective contexts. 'Green Christian' and 'Green Muslim' are merged or hyphenated identities, further illustrating their 'in-between' status. However in Chapter 3 I proposed a primary faith identity model, which suggested that faith activists maintained a primary faith identity which represented their most salient relational identity. Their Christian or Muslim identities (which as I discussed in Chapter 3 are not monolithic identities) are primary identities because they assist activists in maintaining a sense of continuity and uniqueness and may represent a matrix for their self-organising process. As I further suggested in Chapter 9, this matrix may be understood as an 'an affective organiser', or what Douglas Davis (2011) calls a 'pattern of emotions', that certain religious traditions foster at collective levels.

As I showed in Chapter 6 faith activists were often marginalised in their own faith communities due to their ecological beliefs or, at best, they felt that these beliefs were not represented in their home church and other religious organisations. Moreover they were also a minority in the Climate Movement as both my qualitative and quantitative data illustrated. Faith activists reported that they felt rejuvenated and inspired during ecological retreats or other such events where they could come together and express both their faith and green identity. I showed in Chapter 6, and further in Chapter 8, that at Climate Camp, Christians remained separated from the bigger group and they demarcated their identity through prayer and ritual. However Green Christians and Green Muslim did not assert their own green identity inside their home church in a

similar way, through demarcations. Since these institutions represented their primary faith identities they remained attached to traditional faith communities and organisations even when their beliefs and practices were clearly at odds with them. They often introduced green ideas practices to a degree that was likely to be accepted by their faith communities, like for example LINE/ WIN introducing Permaculture design through a gardening and community project in their local mosque. I however argued that these somewhat peripheral connections with faith communities are still illustrative of the activist faith networks marginalised status.

In Chapter 6 I further addressed both my second and third research questions (RQ 2 & RQ 3) regarding how the processes of cross-fertilisation between the networks were related to the negotiations and mergers in activists' identity/ identities. The process of translating and thus integrating their Christian identity and their green identity may be seen as a way of allowing green Christians to operate from the very centre of their identity: 'transition in the name of Jesus' as one put it. It may allow for feelings to be reassigned, and in Chapter 3 I proposed the socio-cognitive model of transference (Anderson, 1990) as a means of understanding the processes at work. Hence I argued that although the climate discourse is indeed assimilated by different groups, these shared categories do not necessarily come to 'mean' the same thing for them, since their 'feelings structures' and interior matrixes of meaning are different.

I demonstrated here that green discourse is merged with compatible or congruent Christian vernacular. For instance Permaculture is translated by faith activists in religious idioms in an effort to fully integrate its precepts. In a related way environmentalists can use religious archetypes when explaining new ideas to facilitate their better understanding. I showed that this process of translation or superimposing new information on existing 'feeling structures' serves primarily as a way of avoiding identity conflicts. Thus activists can maintain their loyalty to their faith tradition and a sense of continuity in their own relational identity. For example new collocations are developed that fuse together existing and new *topoi*: the planet becomes 'God's creation', 'the body of the Lord'. Some terms are simply translated so that they can benefit from the affective dimension already contained by the original term: 'transitioning' becomes an equivalent to Christian 'witnessing'. In some cases this translation goes unnoticed, so Green Christians simply

start speaking Permaculture, for example: 'Let God do the heavy work' or 'Find out what God is doing and get out of the way'. Here God is equated with Nature or natural processes. In other cases a new green practice will be done 'in Jesus' name', so still a means of fusing this with tradition.

Muslim activists also assimilated this shared discourse yet they adopted it more fully. They did not translate it – which may be for purely linguistic reasons: this new discourse may not be in competition with their English lexical structures, because they are using English as a secular language. Since these mergers do not take place we can see that after assimilating Permaculture they have changed their name. In their new name, 'Wisdom in Nature', there is no trace of their Islamic faith identity, although of course they still focus on both Islam and ecology. Similarly the Muslim group distinguished between Islamic prayers and ecological reflections, unlike the Christian informants who were a lot more inclined to innovate with traditional repertoires and perform ecological rituals. Muslims more often reported having to culturally commute between Deep Ecology and Islam, or experienced identity conflicts, like being 'both green and black' for instance.

In Chapter 7 I looked the climate networks' experimentation with community and spirituality. I found that spirituality performs a double function in this field. On one hand, networks maintain their autonomy within the larger climate and transition network by having different approaches to spirituality or spiritual practices. On the other hand common artistic forms of a green spirituality function like a currency in this field. Similarly networks experiment with community in different ways. Both qualitative and quantitative data show that local community building is perceived by activists as the most important and effective measure in fighting and responding to Climate Change (alongside direct action). The task of building a zero carbon society depends, from the point of view of activists, on successfully binding new plural communities with a collective spiritual currency that can provide unity and cooperation.

My data signal a transition from a more private, individual spirituality (Heelas, 1996; Lewis & Melton, 1992) to a spirituality in service of community. Spirituality in this context aims to aggregate (for example at Climate Camp there was a call for creating a 'Network of Spiritual Activists'), to find common modes of (artistic) expression (such as prayer and poetry trees,

dragons, circle dancing, rainbows or lantern processions); and is preoccupied with 'duty' and 'the collective' – which had previously been contrasted by some scholars (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005) as belonging to the territory of religion.

Climate spirituality is related to other healing and holistic spiritualities, which also have a social dimension (see Corrywright, 2009), yet it places the planet, rather than the individual, at the forefront of its concerns. My data shows that at all levels climate activism is attempting to open up more autonomous forms of expression to a more collective, communal and global vision. This is partly dictated by the essence of the problem, alleviating Climate Change presupposes a global pledge (everyone's carbon footprint counts), but it also represents the next sequence of previous ideals and aspirations of producing a social transformation through personal or self transformation. Future research in this field can further chronicle the course of these efforts, and more research is needed to investigate spirituality in inter-faith and quasi-secular settings. For this purpose the intersection between Transition Towns and faith communities promises many interesting avenues for future research. Research into the 'Heart and Soul' of Transition Towns, as local spiritual hubs for Transition communities, could investigate the future of climate spirituality, and whether it can maintain its commitment to Deep Ecology under varying local influences.

Faith groups assimilate available forms of eco spirituality, such as praying through painting for instance (from Deep Ecology praxis), but are also keen to share their own spiritual practices with the larger movement. For faith activists their respective traditions already contain 'deep' spiritual practices and they often see Deep Ecology as 're-inventing the wheel'. Often spirituality is offered by faith groups as a non-obligatory tool or gift that anyone can use, irrespective of their faith. For example my Muslim informants organised a multi-faith 'Fast for the Planet' day when all participants were invited to fast during the day and break fast together at sun set, following a workshop that focussed on Climate Change, Permaculture and artistic expression. Although only Muslims and Christians attended the evening, at St. Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London, it was decided the time for breaking fast should be set according to the Jewish tradition. Thus, spirituality, unconnected to a particular faith, can travel and permeate across boundaries. Because of its loose attachment to symbols (symbols are used in an ad-hoc manner and

recycled/ replaced) elements of green spirituality can be easily adopted by different groups, in varying degrees (for instance 'prayer tree' or 'poetry tree').

Bron Taylor contended that 'dark green religion' represents a powerful fast spreading invisible religion that propagates through artistic expression and is inimical to other forms of religiosity (Taylor, 2010). My research partly supports Bron Taylor's claim, although I take a different view of the processes at work in the movement. Climate spirituality is indeed a fast-growing spirituality that is propagated through artistic expression. I proposed that climate spirituality can be conceptualised as a global form that could adapt to different religious and secular contexts, and cross over the secular - religious boundaries, producing such hybrids as an enchanted secularity and de-sacralised religion. I argued that the freedom to rummage through religious traditions chipped away at the sacred dimension of the particular religious experience, facilitating instead self-reflection and self-expression.

In respect to Taylor's contention that dark green religion would destroy other forms of religiosity that were incompatible to it, I showed that it had instead proved to have more positive ways of radically transforming them, whilst faith activists were able to maintain their own faith identity. The Christians and Muslim activists I have researched continue to partake in the web of the climate networks, as well as function inside their respective faith networks and communities. Even when Christians felt that Deep Ecology and their own religious tradition were completely at odds with each other, they could not forsake their Christian identity or involvement (most Christian activists would have their own home church, for example). Future longitudinal research into these groups could perhaps discern whether their beliefs and practices will progressively become too heterodox as to insulate them completely in the web of the Climate Movement and cut them off from their respective faith communities, a trend which is already obvious in some instances.

In chapters 8 and 9, I looked at ecological rituals in the climate networks I have researched and its interface with the protest experience. I have demonstrated that ecological rituals are in essence subversive as they critique/ lament the present order of things. Protest sites, I have showed, are deeply liminal spaces where experiences become ritualised because of the emotional polarity they acquire through the continuous acts of divergence between police/authorities and protestors.

As it may be expected, ecological rituals performed by faith groups need to innovate on traditional repertoires. This process of innovation often preserves the external form (often only at a prosodic level) whilst altering or changing the content. Prayers would often only sound 'Christian' through intonation, rhythm and choired recitation yet their content would be fully ecological or political. This mechanism allows prayers and rituals to function as a connector with a given or chosen community of the past but also project attention onto an imagined community of the future. It anchors the participants in their past tradition yet also provides them with a new vision of the future.

The 'past' represents different things to different networks and groups. For the Christian activists it was of paramount importance to maintain their Christian identity and extend it to incorporate their green identity. This further supports my primary identity theoretical model described in Chapter 3 and answers my third research question (R.Q. 3 asked how do activists maintain their faith identity in collective settings). By identifying the primary identity, it becomes possible to distinguish the other layers of identity that become intersected by the primary identity, such as that of 'transitioner' for instance. For other activists the past could be represented by 17th century Diggers, Celts, Druids, Buddhists, Rainbow warriors, Native Americans. The Christian Anarchists I have interviewed told me that Jesus had been the 'first activist', which seems to also suggest a need to historically intersect both Christianity and Anarchism and hence achieve a holistic identity as opposed to a divided one, namely 'Christian Anarchist' rather than 'Christian and Anarchist'. The exercise of translating Permaculture into Christian vernacular also supports this view, as a means of calibrating past and present values, and being able to act from the centre of one's identity.

Although in some cases ecological rituals may serve to demarcate participants from the bigger group, they more often aim to bring together and consolidate new groups, especially since activists are often heterogeneously brought together. In multi faith and interfaith settings, ecological rituals provide participants with common denominators, which are often globally significant: the planet, endangered polar bears, melting ice, and so on. At the 2009 Day of Global Action, the chosen dress code was blue, a simple but effective way to symbolise unity and

common concerns – in this case the rising tide. Conversely, groups often punctuate such collective occasions with their own internal rituals, for example they would meet in a church for service or mass ahead of the big gathering, to help preserve a sense of identity and reduce the anxiety caused by the anonymity felt inside a large crowd. More so, the church building, as I argued in Chapter 3, would synchronise or bring participants together by immersing them in their shared coordinates of (spatial) meaning. Alternatively space will be reconstructed to evoke a familiar space/place, for example four hay-bales would be turned into an altar in the Christian tent at Climate Camp.

An opposite and complementary dimension of the grieving/ mourning/ lament contained in ecological rituals is represented by its emphasis on ‘celebration’. This polarity between lament and celebration is a paradigmatic axis for ecological ritual. The lament-celebration axis accords with ritual being a connector between past and future, by reconciling a past tradition and a new direction. The element of celebration is often placed at the end of the ritual, following the lament of the past. After expressing feelings of sadness and anger towards Climate Change, transitioners ended by going through a bridal arch and they were cheered on by fellow graduates; the Lady of the Waters lost her polluted train as the procession reached Totnes Castle.

My last research question (R.Q. 4) was concerned with the functions of ecological rituals and proved to represent the key question in my investigation. First, as I have shown ecological ritual can assist participants in performing their primary identity and move toward or integrating other layers of identity, such as activist, transitioner, anarchist, etc. Second, ecological ritual can point participants in a new direction through its lament vs. celebration axis. Yet what is the ultimate function or point of fasting for the planet, or claiming power for the planet? Why is ecological ritual thought by some theorists to be ‘the solution’ in dealing with the environmental crisis?

Thinking back, my research journey started with providing an answer. During my first day in the field, during the first ‘Global Day of Action’ I participated in back in 2007, I listened to George Monbiot say that fighting Climate Change required ‘a revolution of the spirit’. I understood him to say that each of us needed to undergo a profound internal change. Other public voices, such as Barack Obama and Rowan Williams, have also spoken of ‘a change of hearts and a change of

minds' (Obama, 2008) or of something 'akin to a religious conversion' (Williams, 2009) that needed to take place before we could begin to act responsibly and collectively on Climate Change.

Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965), discussed in my Literature Review, stated that collective action was very hard to come by. The larger the group that needs to act collectively for a common good, the less likely it is that they will do so. This is because their personal input, their ability to affect change is reduced by this distribution of effort. We may speculate that the British Climate Movement suffered a downward trend after Copenhagen, precisely because protesters became truly aware of their global task. Hence to act collectively, Olson tells us, there must be 'some special device' (Olson, 1965:2), an individual incentive to join in or there must be coercion. Olson is speaking here of 'rational, self-interested individuals'. However there may be yet another way *self interested* individuals can act collectively where a collective good is concerned, alleviating Climate Change in this case. The wellbeing of the planet, its health and longevity, would have to become a matter of personal interest that is affectively internalised and situated in the heart and in the spirit, as Monbiot and Obama's speeches both suggest. This way self interested individuals would merely act in their personal interest. This personal affective component could not only make an individual willing to act collectively, but act even in spite of collective inaction or at a high personal cost, such as losing one's job for refusing to board a plane.

Some ecological practices held by Heart and Soul groups involve talking to an imaginary next generation, and apologising for the abuses of our present generation. Other Deep Ecology practices ask participants to confess their personal feelings regarding Climate Change. The Council of All Beings ritual begins with 'the Mourning' (a lament). The affective elements, the feelings expressed by the individual participant, as well as the process of assuming personal responsibility for the ecological crisis, represent means of achieving this integration of the ecological welfare of the planet into one's sphere of personal concerns.

The Stark-Bainbridge theory of religion (Stark & Bainbridge, 1987) states that human beings seek rewards, yet rewards are hard to come by. Instead religion offers compensators, blank cheques that will be banked at later dates, if the individual accepts the sacrifices demanded by the

respective religious canons. This personal investment in the cause of fighting Climate Change, the acceptance of a high personal cost or sacrifice despite what may be an intangible collective good that will be 'enjoyed' at a future date or by the next generations, is perhaps one of the most pertinent links between climate activism and religion. This association may have determined a British court to rule that

[a] belief in man-made Climate Change ... is capable, if genuinely held, of being a philosophical belief for the purpose of the 2003 Religion and Belief Regulations' (see Adams & Gray, 2009).

Yet, is the welfare of future generations only 'a compensator' in what we are concerned? Perhaps, as we cannot necessarily speak of it as an immediate, tangible, reward. Conversely we humans may be capable of such levels of empathy that can extend both spatially (towards far away foreign countries affected by Climate Change) and temporally (towards future generations).

Thus ecological rituals can help both participants and their audiences to relate affectively to the planet and its inhabitants, to develop a new relational identity: a planetary identity. Ecological rituals and performances (from both faith and secular quarters) use their cathartic faculty not only to acquaint the individual with ecological or environmental issues but also aim to make the health and wellbeing of the planet, the preservation of biodiversity, the prosperity of the next generations or the future fate of nations that will be most affected by Climate Change, personal, private concerns - matters of the heart. The Climate Movement brings these somewhat distant issues (from the standpoint of the individual) to the fore by performing Climate Change, using hyperbolic satire or metaphors of urgency, such as 'run-away Climate Change', or through symbolic actions, such as wearing diving suits whilst urging action on Climate Change.

The subversive actions of the movement are primarily ways to emotionally engage both their audience and themselves, and of making these 'facts' personal. Even bantering with the police is a means of reinforcing one's activist identity and the strength of one's own convictions, in ways familiar to missionary youth in some new religious movements. As I have argued in Chapter 9, bantering with the police at the 'gates' is most importantly a process of affective engagement, as

the act of diverging from your interlocutor is 'loaded in affect' (Giles and Coupland, 1991: 85). Divergence is itself stimulated by asymmetrical status and power roles intrinsic to the act of protest. Hence the performance of an oppressed identity (through associations with indigenous cultures or other oppressed movements) is also a means of affective stimulation. In the words of climate activists: 'They are building fences, we are building a movement'.

Ecological ritual or ritual more generally is not only a means of pledging one's allegiance to the collective/ centre but, equally, it represents a means of drawing the collective in or putting the collective into the very centre of individual concerns, making it personal. Taking communion is a good example for this physical ingestion of the collective. In establishing ecological leitmotifs or chronic cues, such as 'lyrical trees' or polar bears, ecological rituals may have a function in facilitating processes of transference and thus enabling this affective engagement with the planet. Fasting for the planet, in this case, is a means of superimposing the planet onto the God imago. Even more telling in this respect are the frequent associations between the planet and 'our mother'. By preserving elements of form and innovating on content, religious rituals can facilitate a re-direction of feelings from such central cognitive-affective units as 'mother' or 'God' onto the planet.

Deep Ecology ideas and practices reject an orientation towards a higher power, as in fact they critique both 'higher' and 'power'. Like with Permaculture, ecological practices orient the audience/ reader/ listener spatially differently from Abrahamic religions for instance. They critique the vertical 'above/ below' paradigm and offer a new horizontal one. Although through this spatial opposition Deep Ecology and various environmental practices appear to constitute an alternative to religious beliefs/practices, I suggested though my discussion in Chapter 3 that it can equally qualify as a means of changing and extending our spatial relatedness.

Finally, we may ask, what about the planet? Are we to be enchanted with it, afraid of it or responsible for it? Today anyone with access to google earth can 'see' the planet and inspect it thoroughly. We can see the earth from space. There are few mysteries left for us here. From ocean floors to fog-wrapped mountain tops, everything is finally mapped. We cannot any longer imagine (and fear) far and distant lands and we have little need to evoke the cosmos through transcendental

loci – we are mapping space too. We can get anywhere on earth and we are exploring space. But can we ‘act locally and think globally’?

Religion and environmentalism are both concerned with our relationships to others and to place. Religious vs. secular, enchantment vs. disenchantment, sacred vs. profane are linked dichotomies that have endured in Religious Studies. In his *Origins of Meaning: Language in the Light of Evolution*, James R. Hurford contends at the very start of his argument that ‘In the beginning was meaning’ and ‘In the beginning was action’, and so that meaning and action preceded and laid the basis for human words (Hurford, 2007: xi). Sacred and profane, central to religion, could thus be placed on a spatial axis, a grounded axis of meaning, where they may simply run from homely, known, marked, safe territory all the way to ‘the great’, vastly incomprehensible, potentially threatening yet ‘all loving’ territory/place/space. On one hand, marked, known, domesticated, tame, unproblematic, local and, on the other, risky, unsafe, threatening and thus needing to be placated – can take turns to inseminate meaning into each other. They can converge with each other, either by safeguarding the home with invoked cosmic loci or by transporting local coordinates into new, potentially inimical, terrain to evoke the familiar, the home. Ritual, I proposed, can be seen as a means of harmonising place/s.

This process of ‘localising the global and globalising the local’, Marion Bowman writes, produces a ‘hyperlocalisation’, a meaningful centrality (‘Heart Chakra of Planet Earth’) for place and its inhabitants/participants (see Bowman, 2005). Considering this approach to religion as meaning-filled (unifying) topography, we could contend that in religion we may find humanity’s first attempt to think ‘globally’, go beyond the immediate surrounding and into unknown territory. Deep Ecology, like religion, also wishes for us to think beyond ourselves, only it wishes for us to go further, to move from ‘local-global’ to ‘local-global-cosmic’, and from our local identity to a planetary identity. Making ‘a/one home’ of the earth itself – the earth into one heartland for humanity – may put us on the way of developing new, much needed, global values. My research shows that ecological ritual can foster an emotional and reflective relationship between participants and the planet that can create, or at least spark into being, a new planetary identity for activists and, possibly, their audiences.

Future research should address the direction of the ongoing interactions between religion and environmentalism. It is likely that in some cases environmentalism will continue to be superimposed on familial, congruent, religious territory, like the faith groups I have researched are attempting to do. Future research into Transition initiatives could determine how successful these will be in creating a 'Heart and Soul' common spirituality for its heterogeneous communities. I can speculate that these communities will continue with the acquisition of various religious practices, archetypes or symbols and thus provide environmentalism with a surrogate reverent or contemplative dimension. Lastly 'secular environmentalism' of the mainstream variety should be the object of future research in Religious Studies as its study promises to provide significant insight into the link between the behavioural, cognitive and affective component of moral values. I can anticipate that, having Climate Change as a catalyst, environmentalism may attempt to create its own, previously unclaimed, space inside the sphere of our most private, personal concerns, inside our 'hearts'. To learn how to relate affectively to the planet and to make space for the endangered earth and its beings, our hearts might have to grow a few sizes, our sight might have to stretch further in the distance, in both space and time.

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APPENDIX 1

‘The Cosmic Walk’ and ‘The Council of All Beings’

The Council of All Beings and the Cosmic Walk are fundamental in understanding ecological ritual, as they may be considered the very primer of current Deep Ecology praxis. These ecological rituals focus on the planet and thus the scale is enlarged from local to global. This attempts to unite or relate participants to a planetary community and re-assemble participants and the planet as one. Both rituals were created around the same time, in the mid 1980s, and are now, in various forms, practiced across the world, by environmentalists, activists and green religionists. To my knowledge no formal research has been done on these rituals. I therefore refer here only to sources offered by ritualists themselves. My attempt to conduct research through participant observation in a Council of All Beings performed by GreenSpirit members was refused by organisers in 2009.

i) The Cosmic Walk

The Cosmic Walk is an ecological ritual created by Sister Miriam MacGillis in the mid 1980s in New Jersey, USA. The context for this ritual can be found in Tomas Berry and Brian Swimme’s *Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era, A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos* (Swimme & Berry, 1992). Some similar rituals, using largely the same material, are ‘the Universe Story’ and ‘The Epic Ritual’ (Barlow, 2005: 612). Berry’s ideas were first articulated in 1978, in his article ‘The New Story’. (Berry, 1978) This was the start of Berry’s transformation from a theologian to a ‘geologist’ (Berry cited in Tucker, 2005: 164). Berry, like Mathew Fox and others, is a reformist ecotheologian. He proposes a whole new story of creation, as the one we have no longer works, and ‘humans are in between stories’, (ibid.) an interesting interpretation of the postmodern condition.

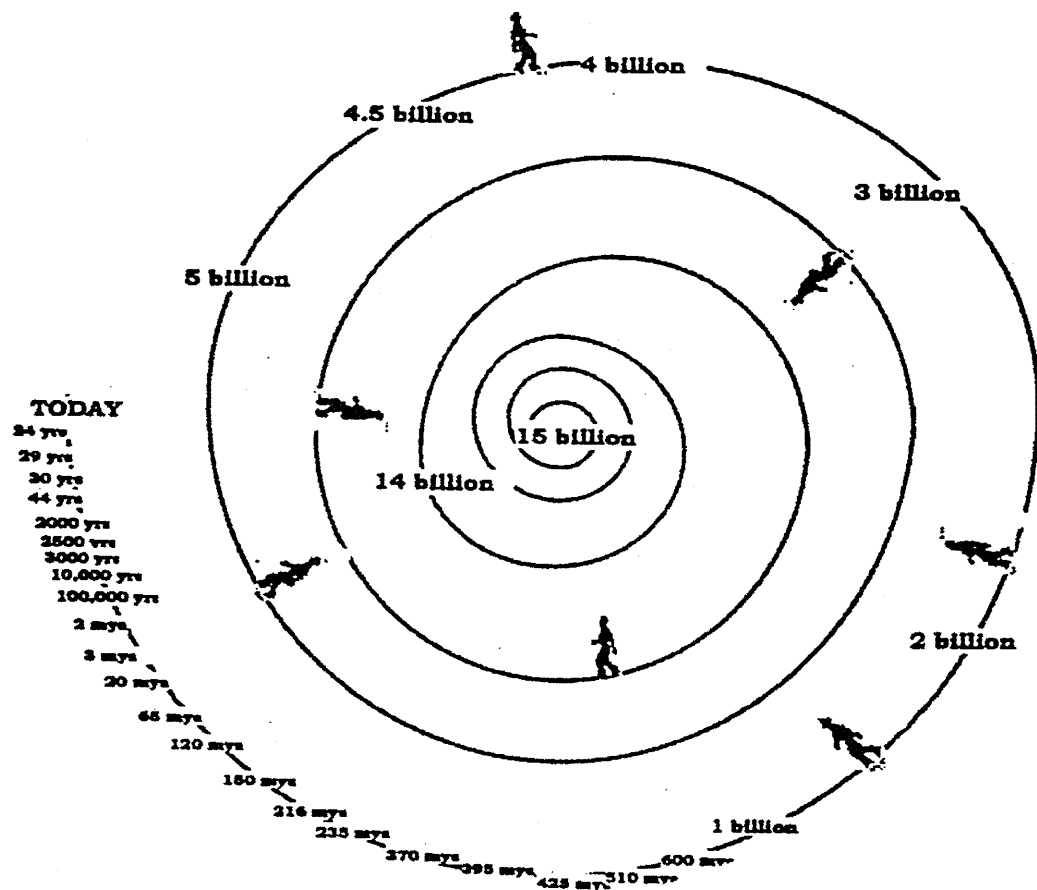


Fig. 36 A blueprint for the Cosmic Walk, courtesy of *The Still Retreat Centre*

Berry understood the story of the evolution of the Universe and the Earth as an epic story, 'the greatest story ever told'. The Cosmic Walk therefore attempts to tell this great story by a symbolic walk that represents the evolution of the universe and of our planet. The walker re-enacts this journey by walking a marked spiral and posing for important milestones in the development of the universe. The spiral is customarily made with rope, or it may sometimes be painted on the floor of a large room, when performed indoors. The milestones are marked with river stones, candles, posters, which provide a timeline for these cosmic and earthly events. The narrator often reads the prologue from Swimme and Berry's *Universe Story*, which poetically describes the physical evolution of the universe and the Earth, putting astrophysics, science and history into poetic and metaphoric language:

We wish to know: What came first? What was the beginning? The event before all other events? The time before all other times? We do not know. It may be that we cannot know.

And yet we have named it: the Dream, the Mystery, the quantum vacuum, God ... Thirteen

billion years ago, from that place that was no-place, from that time that was no-time, the cosmos flared forth in a silent blaze of inconceivable brilliance. All the energy that would ever exist in the entire course of time erupted from a point smaller than a grain of sand.

Unimaginably vast quantities of elementary particles, light, and space-time itself, unfurled and expanded from this quantum vacuum, this unity of origination. If in the future, stars would blaze and lizards would blink in their light, these actions would be powered by the same numinous energy that burst forth at the dawn of time' (Swimme & Berry, 1992: 7).

Contemplative music accompanies this narration as the walker synchronously punctuates the story by lighting candles on his or her spiral journey. The last landmarks, dotted very close together on the last few feet of the spiral, tell of recent events in Earth's history, such as the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 (marking the beginnings of the Environmental Movement) or the first landing on the Moon in 1969. Finally the walker reaches the end as the narrator gets to 'Today we tell the story of the universe [...] This is our story' (Edwards, 1999). The other participants in the ritual can now walk the spiral meditatively, towards the centre and back again. They light their candles and join the first walker.

Larry Edwards, one of many Cosmic Walk ritualists, offers this suggestive ending for the Cosmic Walk, an ending that echoes most scripts for the ritual:

Today the Story of the Universe is being told as our sacred Story. The creativity implicit in the Great Emergence and expressed in the remarkable longing of Earth for life, continues as this moment, in us, as one (Edwards, 2010).

ii) *The Council of All Beings*

The Council of All Beings is a ritual created in 1985 by Joana Macy and John Seed, during a workshop tour in Australia (Macy, 2005: 425). Both Macy and Seed are Buddhist activists, who share a 'passionate interest in deep ecology' and for the writings of Arne Naess (ibid.). In her article on 'The Council of All Beings', in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Nature* Macy did not wish to distinguish the ritual from the gathering in which it is held, and chose instead to talk about

these 'related processes' simultaneously. Hence she described the Council of All Beings in three consecutive sections: 'The Mourning', 'Remembering' and 'Speaking for other Life Forms'.

The Mourning is in essence an opportunity to feel and release the pain of the world. The interdependence of all life is a mental concept, Macy explains, 'without power to affect our attitudes and behaviours, unless it takes on some emotional reality' (Macy, 2005: 426). The practice for the Mourning may take a variety of forms, such as

[...] a recitation of the names of endangered species, with drumbeat and pauses for people to name what is disappearing from their lives today. Or the Cairn of Mourning, where, gathered in a circle, people move to the centre, one by one, and place a stone. Each stone represents a loss that has occurred or is occurring. As it is brought forward, the loss is described: a family farm replaced by a shopping mall, a fishing stream polluted or paved over, clean air, safe food...' (Macy, 2005: 426).

Following the Mourning, The Remembering is a more interior version of the Cosmic Walk. Here participants go on an imaginary evolutionary journey, recapitulating 'the adventures of *our* (my emphasis) four and half billion years' (Macy, 2005, 427). This stage, Macy states, helps us to 'start learning to act our age.' Finally, after these two preliminary stages, the Council starts with 'Speaking for Other Life Forms'. This is solemn meeting where participants take on a non-human identity, having 'been chosen', or rather having allowed the choice to be made 'intuitively'. Participants silently make masks to represent their new identities. In the first stage the Beings in the Council speak among themselves about the 'changes and hardships they are experiencing in these present times'(Macy, 2005: 427). Macy exemplifies from the many Councils she has lead:

The shells of my eggs are so thin and so brittle now, they break before my young are ready to hatch [...] I am tightly crowded in a dark place, far from grass and standing in my own shit. My calves are taken away from me, and instead cold machines are clamped to my teats. I call and call for my young. Where did they go? What happened to them? (Macy, 2005: 427)

After all the Beings share their plight, participants take turns to move into the centre of the circle, remove their mask and represent humanity. As this is a Council of All Beings, humans must be

present, Macy explains. Now the rest of the Beings, who remain in the circle, can address humans, tell them directly how human actions affect them. The 'human' in the centre is not allowed to speak, only listen. This is an opportunity to experience the isolation in which humans imagine themselves to exist. The Council ends with humans being offered gifts by the other-than-human Beings. The Beings offer their wisdom, as they decide to 'help this young species deal with the crisis it has created' (Macy, 2005: 428).

I, Condor, give you my keen, far-seeing eye. Use that power to look ahead, beyond your daily distractions, to heed what you see and plan. [...] As Leaf, I would free you humans from your fear of death. My dropping, crumbling, moulding allows fresh growth. (Macy, 2005: 428).

One by one the Beings give their gift, remove their mask and join the humans. Finally the Council concludes, with either music, exhilarant drumming or silence, according to the wishes of all participants. Participants may now put on 'human masks' (preserve their new identity, rather than resume their human identity), 'as we re-enter the world of the two-legged' (Macy, 2005: 428).

APPENDIX 2

Dates of Research

1. Global Day of Action on Climate Change, London, 8 December 2007
2. 'Food and Climate Change: Food Production, Distribution and Consumption in the Context of Climate Change', Cecil Sharpe House, London, 16 January 2008.
3. Meeting at LARC – London Action Resource Centre with Isaiah 58, London, 31 July 2008
4. Climate Camp Kingsnorth, Kent, 1 August 2008 – 11 August 2008
5. Christian Ecology Link Annual Member's Meeting and Conference: 'Transport – A Journey to a Fairer Future', The Church of Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes, 21- 22 November 2008
6. 'A Time to Build an Arc, Worship, Reflection and Prayer', Hide Street Methodist Church, 6 December 2008
7. Global Day of Action on Climate Change, London, 6 December 2008
8. London Islamic Network for the Environment Open Forum, London, 24 January 2009
9. Welcome to the Banquet, Risking Community, Ringsfield, Suffolk 13-15 February 2009
10. London Islamic Network for the Environment Open Forum, London, 21 February 2009
11. 'Fast for the Planet', London Islamic Network for the Environment, St. Ethelburga Centre for reconciliation and Peace, London, 22 March 2009.
12. London Islamic Network for the Environment Open Forum, London, 28 March 2009
13. G20 Climate Camp, London, 9 April 2009
14. London Islamic Network for the Environment Open Forum, London, 25 April 2009
15. Green Spirit Sunday Service, Sparkwell Parish, West Devon, 26 April 2009.
16. London Islamic Network for the Environment Open Forum, London, 23 May 2009
17. London Islamic Network for the Environment Open Forum, London, 20 June 2009
18. Operation Noah's 'The London Ark', Westminster, London, 7 July 2009.
19. Climate Camp Cymru, Wales, Medfyl Tydfil, 13-16 August 2009
20. London Islamic Network for the Environment Open Forum, London, 15 August 2009
21. Off Grid: Transition Towns Festival and Sunrise Celebration, Wells, 20-23 August 2009
22. Greenbelt festival 2009, Cheltenham Racecourse, 28-30 August 2009
23. Climate Camp Blackheath, London, 30 August – 1st September 2009
24. Green Sunday with London Islamic Network for the Environment, London, 4 October 2009
25. Operation Noah's Annual Lecture: 'The Climate Crisis: A Christian Response', London, Southwark Cathedral, 13 October 2009.
26. 'Transition Towns – Getting Involved'. Christian Ecology Link Conference, St Mary's Church, Ottery St Marry, Devon, 7 November 2009.

27. Close Meeting with London Islamic Network for the Environment, London, 17 November 2009.
28. Transition Towns Cities Conference, Nottingham, 27-28 November 2009
29. The Wave: Global Day of Action on Climate Change, London, 5 December 2009
30. Transition Towns: Facilitating and Consensus Workshop, 14-15 December 2009.
31. 'Age of Stupid' showing followed by public discussion, Operation Noah, Winchfield, 10 January 2010.
32. Christian Ecology Link Retreat, 12-14 February 2010, Scarborough
33. Power for the Planet, Transition Towns Heart and Soul workshop, Bristol, 9 March 2010.
34. Six Billion Ways Environment and Peace Conference, Richmix, London, 20 March 2010.
35. Greenbelt festival 2010, Cheltenham Racecourse, 27-30 August 2010
36. Annual Members General Meeting for CEL and Operation Noah members, London, 6 November 2010
37. Global Day of Action on Climate Change, London, 4 December 2010

APPENDIX 3

Interview Schedule

Nr.	Interviewee	Location of interview	Organisation	Date
1.	Martin G.	London	Isaiah 58	01.08.2008
2.	Miriam B.	Kingsnorth Camp Kent	Christian Café	03.08.2008
3.	Rachel J.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	CEL/ ON	04.08.2008
4.	Adam P.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	Isaiah 58	06.08.2008
5.	Pam T.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	Isaiah 58	06.08.2008
6.	Serena W.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	N/A	07.08.2008
7.	Cain C.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	Isaiah 58	07.08.2008
8.	Wolfe B.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	N/A	09.08.2008
9.	Balen. C.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	N/A	09.08.2008
10.	Peter E.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	Christian Cafe	10.08.2008
11.	Martin G.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	Isaiah 58	10.08.2008
12.	Claire T.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	Christian Café	10.08.2008
13.	Helen V.	Kingsnorth Camp, Kent	Christian Café	10.08.2008
14.	Elisabeth A.	Greenbelt, Cheltenham Spa	CEL	05.09.2008
15.	Rosy V.	Birmingham	SCM	10.10.2008
16.	Helen T.	Totnes	TT	05.05.2009
17.	Jill R.	Totnes	GreenSpirit and TT	05.05.2009
18.	Wendy A.	Totnes	TT	06.05.2009
19.	Jean H.	Totnes	GreenSpirit	06.05.2009
20.	Ahmed M.	London	Line	04.10.2009
21.	Michael C.	Church of All Saints, Totnes	GreenSpirit	06.05.2009
22.	Martin G.	University of York, York	Isaiah 58	16.10.2009
23.	Joan D.	Ringsfield, Suffolk	CEL	16.10.2009
24.	Paul B.	Ringsfield, Suffolk	CEL	16.10.2009
25.	Anne S.	Ringsfield, Suffolk	CEL	16.10.2009
26.	Laura G.	Ringsfield, Suffolk	CEL	16.10.2009
27.	Jim C.	Ottery St Mary, Devon	CEL	07.11.2009

28.	Trevor S.	Nottingham	GreenSpirit and TT	27. 11.2009
29.	Rosalind R.	Nottingham	TT	27.11.2009
30.	Bianca A.	(US resident- Telephone interview)	GreenSpirit	12.01.2010
31.	Tony E.	Scarborough	CEL	14.02.2010
32.	Jorge D.	Scarborough	CEL	14.02.2010
33.	Sue G.	London	LINE	05.03.2010
34.	Claire R.	London	CEL	16.05.2010
35.	Barbara E.	Scarborough	CEL	13.02.2010
36.	Ahmed M.	Brighton	LINE	08.03.2010
37.	Shuma M.	Brighton	LINE	08.03.2010
38.	Wasil D.	Brighton	LINE	08.03.2010

APPENDIX 4

Survey Questionnaire

My name is Maria Nita and I am a research student at the Open University. My thesis is broadly concerned with Religion, Spirituality and Climate Change. If you take part, your contribution will be used strictly for academic research and your name will not be mentioned. Thank you very much for taking part!

Your name and contact details:

.....
.....

Your gender?..... Your age?.....

1. How long have you been involved with the Climate Camp and how did you come across it?

.....
.....
.....

2. Are you (or were you in the past) involved in other environmental campaigns?

When/Which?.....

.....
.....
.....

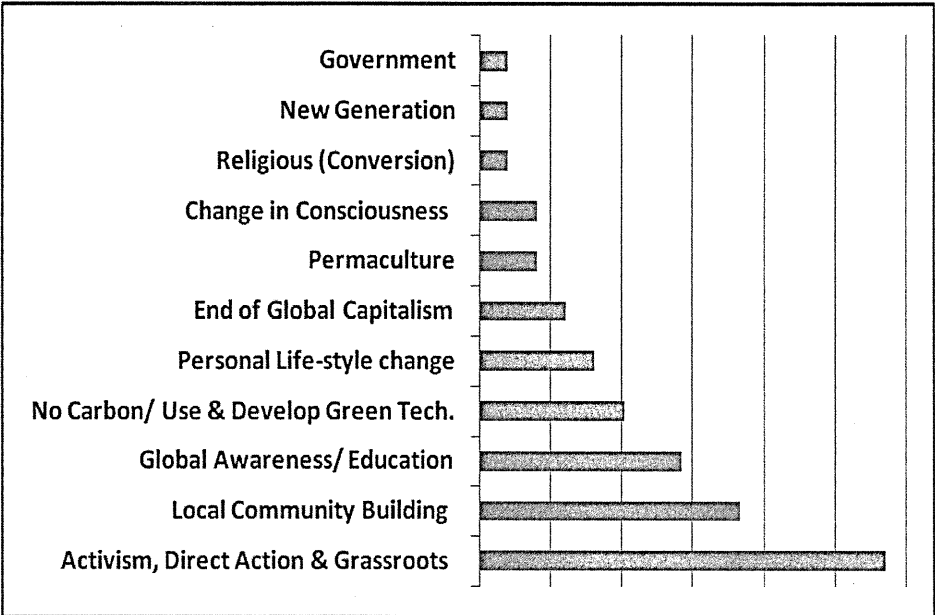
3. How would you describe your religious affiliation? (if any)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Which (any) one thing do you consider most hopeful when it comes to Climate Change solutions/ mitigation? Why?

APPENDIX 5

Fig 37 Incidence of solutions given by activists for combating Climate Change

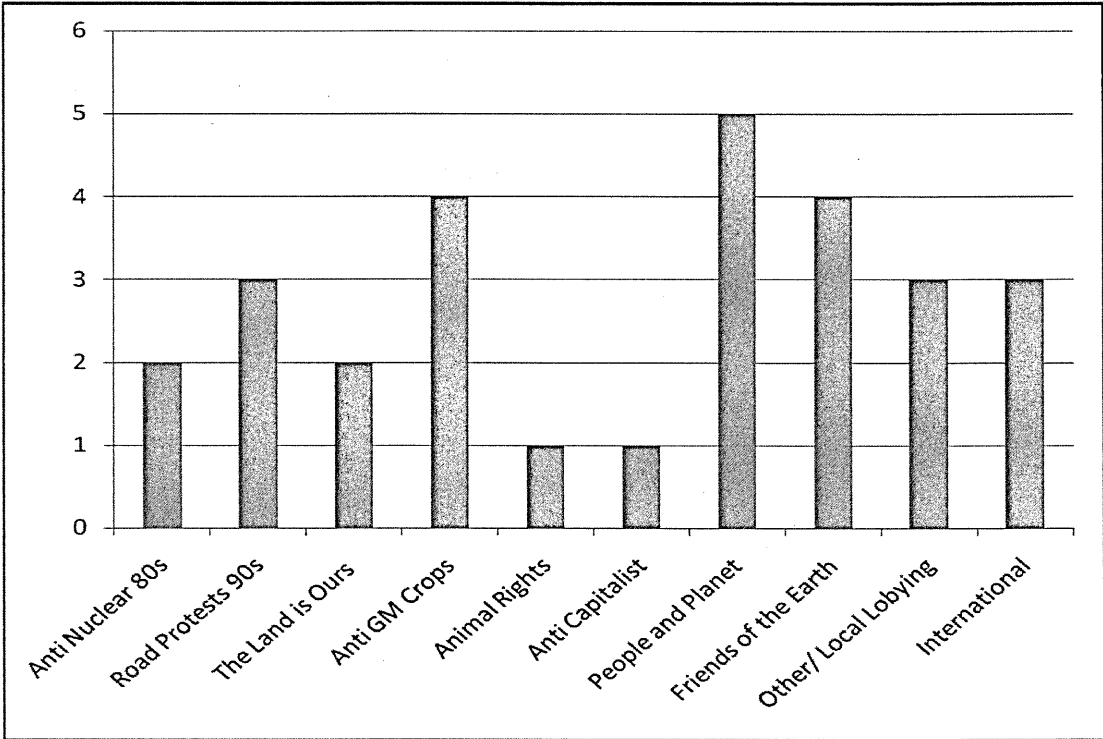


Solutions (times named and in percentages)

Activism, Direct Action & Grassroots	14	29%
Local Community Building	9	18%
Global Awareness/ Education	7	14%
No Carbon/ Use & Develop Green Tech.	5	10%
Personal Life-style change	4	8%
End of Global Capitalism	3	6%
Permaculture	2	4%
Change in Consciousness	2	4%
Religious (Conversion)	1	2%
New Generation	1	2%
Government	1	2%
	49	100%

APPENDIX 6

Fig. 38 Activist involvement with previous campaigns



Anti Nuclear 80s	2
Road Protests 90s	3
The Land is Ours	2
Anti GM Crops	4
Animal Rights	1
Anti Capitalist	1
People and Planet	5
Friends of the Earth	4
Other/ Local Lobbying	3
International	3

Fig. 39 New to activism/ previously involved in activism and age distribution

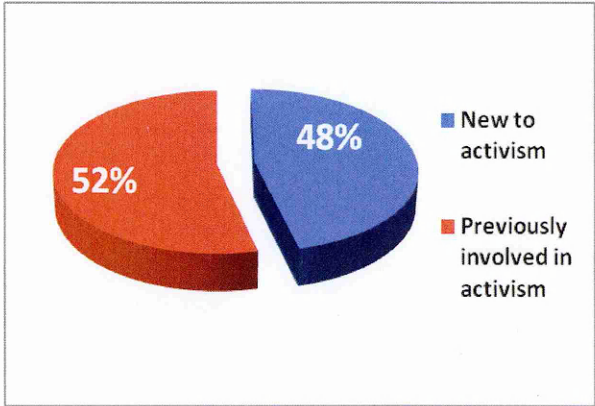


Fig. 40 New to activism (41 respondents/ 52%) vs. experienced activists or previously involved in activism (37 respondents/ 48%).

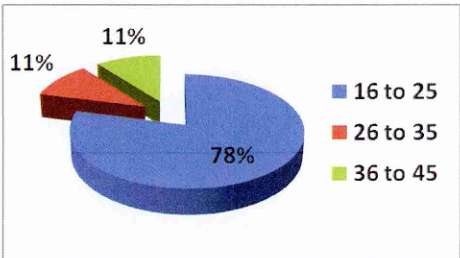


Fig. 8 Age distribution: new to activism

- 31 new activists were in the 16 to 25 age band, representing 78%
- 5 new activists were 26 to 35 (11%)
- 5 new activists were 36 to 45 (11%)

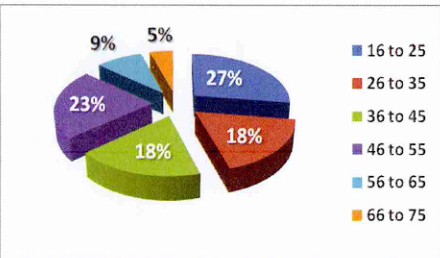
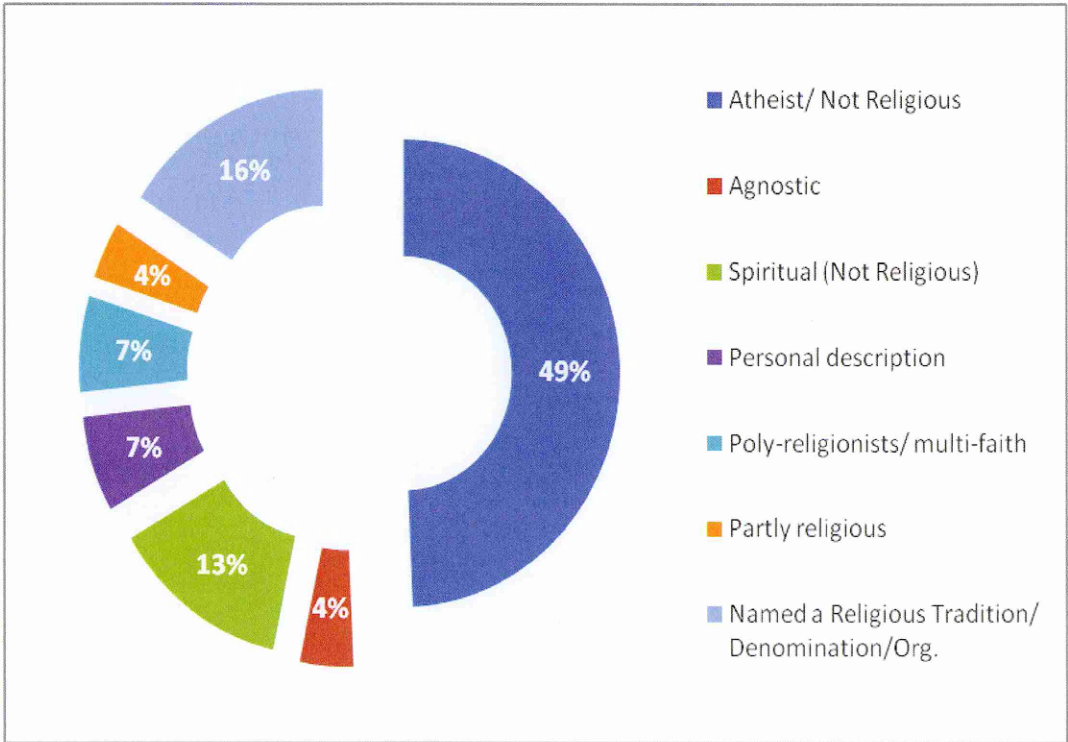


Fig. 9 Age of activists coming from other campaigns

- 9 experienced activists were in the 16 to 25 age band representing 27%
- 6 experienced activists were 26 to 35 (18%)
- 6 experienced activists were 36 to 45 (18%)
- 8 experienced activists were 46 to 55 (23%)
- 4 experienced activists were 56 to 65 (9%)
- 2 experienced activists were 66 to 75 (5%)

APPENDIX 8

Fig. 41 Religion affiliation among activists London and Welsh Climate Camps 2009



	Both Camps in %	Wales	London	Both Camps
Atheist/ Not Religious	49%	15	22	37
Agnostic	4%	1	2	3
Spiritual (Not Religious)	13%	5	5	10
Personal description	7%	2	3	5
Poly-religionists/ multi-faith	7%	2	2	5
Partly religious	4%	1	2	3
Named a religious organisation	16%	8	4	12

Consent Form

Participant's name:

This interview will contribute to a research project on religious groups involved in the Climate Movement. This form has been drawn up in order to ensure that your contribution is used only in accordance with your wishes. You will not be named in any place in the written body of my PhD thesis and the information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. If you decide to withdraw your participation during the next two weeks, the collected data will be destroyed.

Are there any further restrictions you wish to place on this material?

(please specify)

.....
.....

I consent to the above specifications: **YES/ NO** (please delete as appropriate).

Signature of Interviewer:

Signature of Participant:

Maria Nita

Faculty of Arts

The Open University

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

MK7 6AA

Email: **m.nita@open.ac.uk**

Should you have any questions or concerns about your collaboration with this research project and feel that I cannot address them directly or fairly, please contact the Open University:

The Open University

Faculty of Arts

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

MK7 6AA

GLOSSARY

Affinity Group. An affinity group was a small group of activists, commonly less than ten people, whose members formed emotional ties as they prepared or trained for a particular direct action event. The stages of preparation could last between one day to many months, depending on the aims and level of risk involved.

A Rocha. A Rocha is a Christian international organisation, founded in 1983, in Portugal. A Rocha communities promote conservation projects and environmental education.

Big Green Gathering. The Big Green Gathering (BGG) was an environmental festival held in UK (Somerset and Wiltshire) between 1994 and 2007.

Cultural commute. The phrase ‘cultural commute’ was first used by Muzammal Hussain, chair of Wisdom in Nature.

Diggers. The diggers, also known as the *True Levellers*, were agrarian communists led by Gerrard Winstanley in England in 1649 (see Campbell, 2010: 129). Although the Diggers experienced opposition from some church officials there are no historical accounts to confirm their own directed dissent against the clergy or institutionalised religion as climate activists might suggest.

Direct action. Direct action (DA) referred mostly to non violent protest activities that were not legally permitted. Climate activists would most commonly be involved in both legal actions, such as the annual ‘Global Day of Action’ and a whole spectrum of other forms of protest, from taking part in the workshops offered at protest camps to, more extremely, standing in the way of coal diggers or sabotaging mining equipment.

Eco-congregation. Eco-congregation is an ecumenical organisation that aims to provide environmental resources and education to Christian churches.

Eco-reformation. I suggested an analogy between the ecological re-orientation of certain Christian organisations and the Protestant Reformation in 16th century Europe, which led to a schism in Western Christianity and the creation of Protestantism.

Greenham Common. Greenham Common was a Women's Peace Camp for anti-nuclear protestors, which became established in 1981, in Berkshire, England.

Last Rites. The Last Rites is one of the seven Christian sacraments, which is administered to the dying or gravely ill.

Network. Aside from the models discussed and proposed in the thesis, I commonly employed the term 'network' to refer broadly to the people who made up a certain organisation (contrary to Actor-Network-Theory's more ecological understanding of the term 'network' and despite using ANT as a conceptual model). For example, Christian Ecology Link (CEL) represented a network of Green Christians from various denominations and with many other affiliations. I sometimes employed the term group to refer specifically to the group of people who represented the network at a given time and in a given place. For instance the CEL members who took part in their annual retreat were a faith group who physically stood for the network on a particular occasion. Usually the core group remained the same, and I sometimes employed the term 'group' to refer to the core members rather than the larger network.

Occupy. The Occupy Movement is a global protest movement that began in 2011. The movement opposes social and economic inequalities, specifically corporations and the global financial system. In the UK the Occupy Movement took on a particular (religiously polarised) character through their occupation of St. Paul's Cathedral in November 2011 (see Tremlett, 2012).

Pachamama. Bolivian Earth goddess, more widely venerated by the indigenous people of the Andes. The Bolivian Dance for Mother Earth/Pachamama performed by climate activists was originally an indigenous agrarian rite. Bolivian activists, like other indigenous people, often take part in international protest activities on Climate Change (see Harvey, 2010).

Plane Stupid. 'Plane Stupid' is a climate activist network founded in 2005 in UK. The network is focused on protesting against airport expansion through non-violent direct action.

Process/ process points. In consensus decision making, process is simply the process of reaching consensus. Activists follow rigorous strategies to make sure that 'process points' are dealt

with and details are not overlooked during meetings. Participants can interrupt the facilitator by raising their hands to sign the letter 'P', meaning they have a process point to make and need to be heard before others.

Rising Tide. 'Rising Tide' is an international climate activist network (well represented in the UK) which was founded in 2000. The network is particularly concerned with reducing the sourcing and use of fossil fuels, as the root cause of climate change.

Rocket stove. A rocket stove is commonly made of an empty oil canister. Through a simple and efficient design rocket stoves require a minimal amount of wood or twigs to work.

Worldwork. 'Worldwork' or 'worldworks' is an international organisation that aims to provide conflict facilitation and training in peace-making, through non-violence methods.